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A N
Argumentative and Practical
DISCOURSE
O F
Infant-Baptism:
IN WHICH

- I. The Lawfulness of Infant-Baptism is demonstrated.
- II. The Objections against Infant-Baptism are Answered.
- III. The Usefulness of the Ordinance is Asserted.
- IV. The Sinfulness of Re-baptizing Manifested.
- V. The Non-necessity of Dipping Evidenced.
- VI. The Practical Use of Infant-Baptism Urged and Inforced.

Quicumque; Parvulos recentes ab Utero Matris Baptizandos esse negat Anathema esto. Concil. Milevit. Can. 2.

The Third Edition.

By William Burkitt, *Vicar, and Lecturer*
of Dedham in Essex, for the Establishment
of his Parishioners.

Licent'd, Mar. 1. 169¹. Z. Iham.

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The Occasion of the Following Discourse.

SINCE the late General Liberty, the Anabaptists (thinking themselves thereby let loose upon us) have disperst themselves into several Counties: Endeavouring to draw away our People from us; by perswading them to Renounce their first Dedication to God in Baptism, & to enter into their Communion after the Way of Dipping.

One of their Teaching Disciples, having set up in our Neighbourhood for making Proselytes, by Re-baptizing them in a nasty Horse-pond; into which the filth of the adjacent Stable occasionally flows; and out of which his deluded Converts come forth with so much Mudd and Filthiness upon them, that they rather resembled Creatures arising out of the Bottomless Pit, than the Candidates of Holy Baptism, and all this before a promiscuous Multitude in the face of the Sun.

My Spirit hereat was justly moved, (as I think every good mans ought to be) and I could not but passionately mourn, that such a Sacred Institution of our Blessed Saviour, and one of the most venerable Mysteries of our Religion should be thus prostituted and exposed to publick contempt and scorn. Hereupon I apprehend it my obliged Duty, to warn the People of my Charge, of the Sin and Danger of these Principles and Practices: And accordingly in my Exposition of the Church Catechism, treating of the Sacrament of Baptism; I proved the Lawfulness, and Asserted the Usefulness of Infant-Baptism: And manifested the Sinfulness of Re-baptizing.

This so offended our Waterman, that he sent me a Letter, charging me with delivering Scriptureless Doctrine, and desiring that he might hear from me. Whereupon soon after I went to his Meeting-Place, and before the People demanded the Justice of him to hear the doctrine, which unheard he had charged with falsehood, and then required him to make good his charge.

And the better to compose and prepare the minds of the Auditory, as also for obtaining a Blessing upon the Truths delivered: I began with humble Invocation, and calling upon Almighty God for his Influence and Assistance in the following Prayer.

The Prayer.

OH Eternal and Almighty God! Who shewest to them that be in Error the Light of thy Truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of Righteousness; we most humbly beseech Thee at this time to enlighten our Understanding savingly, in the Knowledge of thy Mind and Will, that we may be guided into all Truth necessary to our Salvation. Great is our natural blindness and ignorance, but Thou hast promised that thy Word and thy Spirit shall never depart from us. May we then at all times be taught of God, and made wise unto Salvation; Thou sittest in Heaven that teachest Hearts: Who teacheth like God?

Assist, we pray thee, thy servant in the delivery of the present Message, singly to aim at thy Glory, and compassionately to endeavour the Right information of this Peoples Judgments, and to desire the Salvation of their immortal Souls: To that end, let thy Holy Spirit so influence their minds and wills, that they may hear thy Word without prejudice, that they may entertain thy Truths without partiality, that they may obey from the Heart the form of Doctrine deliverd to them, how contradictory soever it may be to their private Opinions, or secular Interests. All which we humbly beg, in the Name and Mediation of the infinitely worthy Jesus, Who hath both directed and commanded us, when we pray, to say, *Our Father, &c.*

These Two following Books by the same Author.

The Poor Man's Help, and Young Man's Guide; containing

1. Doctrinal Instructions for the right informing his Judgment.
2. Practical Directions for the general Course of his Life.
3. Particular Advices for the well managing of every day; with Reference to his, I. Natural Actions. II. Civil Employment. III. Necessary Recreations. IV. Religious Duties; particularly, 1. Prayer, publick in the Congregation, private in the Family, secret in the Closet. 2. Reading in the Holy Scriptures. 3. Hearing of the Word Preached. 4. Receiving of the Lords Supper. Unto which is added an earnest Exhortation unto all Christians to the Love and Practice of Universal Holiness.

— His Sermon at Mr. Gurnal's Funeral Sermon. Both Printed for and sold by *Tho Parkhurst* at the *Bible and Three-Crowns* in *Cheapside*.

The Substance of the following Discourse was Deliver'd under the ensuing Propositions.

At Lanham in Suffolk, 1691.

1. Prop. **T**hat Baptism by Water is a Sacrament of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ, for the solemn Admission of the Party baptized into the Christian Church; and to be a Sign and Seal unto him of the Covenant of Grace.

2. Prop. That not only those who do actually profess Faith in Jesus Christ, but the Infants of such Professors, may and ought to be Baptized.

3. Prop. That Baptism Administred to persons in their Infancy, is much more useful and advantagious, than when omitted in Youth, and afterwards administered in riper Years.

4. Prop. That Baptism ought but once to be administered to any Person, and ought not to be reiterated or repeated.

5. Prop. That Dipping or Plunging of a Person into the Water, in the Act of Baptizing, is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling Water upon the Person baptized.

6. Prop. That the Efficacy of Baptism is not tyed to that moment of time wherein it is administered; but it is a Christian's duty to make a daily improvement of his Baptismal Vow, as an Engagement to the Practice of universal Holiness.

As to the first of these Propositions, namely, that Baptism by Water is an Ordinance of Christ still in force; you of the *Anabaptists* perswasion and we are agreed:

And I know of none that call themselves Christians who deny Water-Baptism to be an Ordinance of our Saviour, except the *Quakers*, who tell us, it was a Temporary dispensation: And ended with *John the Baptist*.

Many of these *Quakers* were once your *Profelytes*, and here the Righteous Judgment of God upon them, ought with seriousness and sadness of Spirit to be remark'd for denying Infant-Baptism, they are given up to deny all Water-Baptism, and to decry all Gospel-Ordinances, the whole of their Religion being little else than Frenzy and Enthusiasm.

The great Controversie betwixt us and you, lies in the second Proposition; Touching the Subjects capable of Baptism: who the persons are which may and ought to be Baptized. All such as do actually profess Faith in Christ, and Obedience to him, say you, and so say we too: But not only such, for the Infants also of such Professors may and ought to be Baptized.

Therefore for the clearing and confirming of this Proposition: I shall First, propound to your Consideration, several Arguments drawn from the Holy Scriptures for Infant Initiation, shewing the Infant's right to the Seal of the Covenant, from their being in Covenant, and that by Virtue of this Right, the Primitive Church of Old, and all the Reformed Churches at this day did and do admit Infants to Baptism. Secondly, I shall answer the Objections which the Opposers of Infant-Baptism do make against those Arguments.

1. *Arg.* if the Infants of the *Jews* were partakers of Circumcision; then the Infants of Christians, may and ought to be partakers of Baptism.

But the Jewish Infants were partakers of Circumcision: Therefore Christian Infants may and ought to be partakers of Baptism.

If Baptism succeeds in the room of Circumcision. Then as the Jewish Infants were Circumcised; so the

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Infants of Christians may and ought to be Baptized: But Baptism succeeds in the room of Circumcision. Therefore as their Children were Circumcised then, so may ours be Baptized now.

If you deny that Baptism succeeds in the room of Circumcision, I prove it by a double Argument.

1. If Baptism succeeds not in the room of Circumcision; then either Circumcision is not Abolished, or else some other Ordinance succeeds in the room of Circumcision. But to say that Circumcision is not Abolished, is Virtually to deny that Christ is come in the flesh; and no other Ordinance is pretended to succeed in the room of Circumcision. Therefore Baptism undoubtedly succeeds, or nothing succeeds in the room of Circumcision.

2. Again, If Baptism signifies the same thing that Circumcision did, and serves for the same end, for which Circumcision was; then Baptism doth certainly succeed in the room of Circumcision.

But Baptism now signifies the same thing to us which Circumcision did to the *Jews* of old, and serves for the same end to us, which Circumcision did to them; Therefore Baptism under the Gospel succeeds Circumcision under the Law, and consequently as the Jewish Infants were Circumcised, so may ours be Baptised.

That Baptism signifies the same thing that Circumcision did, and is used for the same end for which Circumcision was, will manifestly appear by the ensuing Parallel.

What did Circumcision signifie but the Corruption of Humane Nature? it told the *Jews* that their Children brought something into the World with them, which ought to be early cut off and cast away. And what does Baptism now signifie but the impurity of our Natures which stand in need of the Blood of Jesus Christ to purifie and cleanse them, of which the Water in Baptism is a Sign?

And what was the end of Circumcision? Was it not

the Sacrament of initiation? Did not all Persons enter at this door into the Jewish Church? And are not we by Baptism inducted into the Christian Church?

Was not Circumcision then a discriminating Sign to distinguish the seed of *Abraham* from all other People under Heaven? And are not we by being baptized now into the Name of *Christ*, distinguished from all people in the World whatsoever? Did Circumcision then comprehend Persons of all Ages? Were Infants and Children solemnly initiated as well as grown Men? Would not Almighty God have an Infant of eight days old excluded then from Circumcision for any Natural incapacity? In like manner, has he no where declared that Infants of that Age shou'd be excluded now from Baptism, they being as capable of the visible sign of God's invisible favour now, as they were then. But to put the matter out of all dispute, namely, that Baptism doth succeed in the Room of Circumcision, take *St. Paul's* Testimony, *Col. 2. 11, 12.* *In whom also ye are Circumcised, with the Circumcision made without Hands, by the Circumcision of Christ, buried with him in Baptism.* Observe here, that the design of the Apostle is to take the *Colossians* off from the old Sacramental Right of Circumcision. He informs them that there was no reason why they should be so fond of it, for they were Compleat without it; because *Christ* had substituted a new Circumcision in the Room of it, as being more suitable to the Gospel-state, namely Baptism; and accordingly Christians may now be said by Baptism to be spiritually Circumcised, as the *Jews* of old might be said by Circumcision to be spiritually baptized.

Objection against this Argument.

There was, say the *Anabaptists*, an expresse Command in so many Words for Circumcision; but there is no such expresse command for Infant-Baptism. *Gen. 17. v. 9.* requires Infants to be Circumcised, but shew us a Text in all the New Testament that says, *Let Infants be baptized.*

1. To

1. To this Objection I return a threefold Answer; 1. I acknowledge that the New Testament, tho' it be not wholly silent, yet speaks very little touching the case of Infants, and that (as I conceive) for these two Reasons, 1. Because the Old Testament speaks so much in their case, therefore the New Testament speaks so little; the Old Testament fully declares the mind of God, that not only Believers, but all their Seed, should be owned as his Covenant-servants. Thus in *Deut. 29. 10, 12. Ye stand here before the Lord this day, you and your little ones, to enter into the Covenant with the Lord thy God.* The Old Testament plainly informs us, that Children in their Infancy were admitted Members of the visible Church. Now what need is there that the same thing be repeated over again in the New Testament, which is so frequently and fully asserted in the Old? For it is not the Old Testament alone, nor the New Testament alone, but both together, that contain the rule of Faith and Practice. For as much then, as one Testament doth so freely cast its Light upon the other, we must take heed that we do not undervalue and reject an Old Testament-Text, as no ways useful to clear and establish a New Testament-Truth. The *Jews* reject the New Testament, and the *Anabaptists* (in the case before us) sinfully slight the Old; but without the help of both, we can never understand the mind of God in either.

2. So little is said in the New Testament, about Baptizing Infants, because the custom of Baptizing them was common, and the Practice constant in the Jewish Church, at, and before, our Saviours coming. Whilst Circumcision was the Covenanting Sign, Baptism was the purifying Ceremony among the *Jews*: For when any of the *Gentiles* were admitted into the Jewish Church, both Parents and Children were first Circumcised, and then washed, in token of cleansing them from the filth of their Heathenism; so that Baptism among the *Jews* con-

constantly went along with Circumcision in proselyting the *Gentiles*, till our Saviour's time. And when our Lord entred the Stage of his publick Ministry; he nulls and makes void the severer Ordinance of Circumcision, and substitutes Baptism, the softer and milder Ordinance in its stead, as most suitable to the sweetness and gentleness of the Gospel-state. This our Learned Divines, *Light-foot*, *Taylor*, and *Hammond*, have abundantly proved, out of the Jewish Writers, to the full satisfaction of such as are capable of receiving it.

If now you ask, why our Saviour did not particularly Name Infants, when he instituted Baptism in the room of Circumcision; the answer is, because there was no occasion for it. What need our Saviour declare that Infants ought to have the Seal of the Covenant applyed to them, when it was never deny'd them? What need he bid them Initiate Infants, when 'twas never otherwise? Indeed if Infants had never had the Seal of the covenant applyed to them before, it had been highly requisite that our Saviour should have particularly named them now: But being always included before, if our Saviour had intended their exclusion now, he would most certainly have declared it, which not being done, we may reasonably conclude that the Admission of Infants into the Christian Church, is agreeable to our Saviour's Will.

2. My second Answer to this Objection, that Infants are no where in the New Testament Commanded (in so many words) to be Baptized, is this; Altho' they are not particularly named; yet they are necessarily included in the Commission given for all Nations being Baptized, *St. Mat. 28. v. 19*. Infants being a very considerable part of all Nations: Surely the Universal, (all Nations) does include the individuals, tho' our Saviour does not particularly name them. To clear this to your understandings, let me make use of an illustration. Suppose the King should grant his Royal Charter to make this your Market-Town a Corporation, and all the In-

habitants

bitants of it Free-Men; would any be so idle as to suppose that this Royal Grant doth not include your Children, because it doth not particularly name them? Is not the Son of a Free-Man, a Free-Man as well as his Father? Thus here in the Sacred Charter and Royal Patent of the Covenant of Grace, which is Sealed by Baptism. All the Privileges and Promises of that Covenant granted to Believers, concern their Children as well as themselves, *Acts 2. v. 38. The promise is to you, and to your Children*: That is, the promise of the Covenant belongs to you and yours. The Infants then of Believing Christians are included together with themselves, tho' not particularly named.

3. To this your most popular Objection against Infant Baptism, from the silence of the Scripture in that case, I answer; That which by a just and necessary consequence is deduced from Scripture, is as much the Mind of Christ, as what is contain'd in the express Words of Scripture. The *Arians* of Old rejected consequential Proofs, and required express Words of Scripture only, hoping that way to secure and defend their Errors against the Arguments of the Orthodox. If you of the *Anabaptists* perswasion do the same, know, that if you deny evident and necessary consequences from Scripture, then, 1st. you deny your Saviour's way of Arguing; and 2dly. you condemn your own practice.

1. If you will not allow Scripture consequences, you disallow our Saviour's way of arguing: For how did he prove the Resurrection against the *Sadduces*, *St. Mat. 22. v. 31.* but by a Scripture consequence, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and of Jacob.* Here seems but little in the Text to prove the Resurrection, but there was much in the Argument, for thus our Saviour Argues: That to which Almighty God pronounceth himself a God, is alive, and has a true and real existence. If Almighty God pronounceth himself a God to *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, many hundred years after their

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their Death, therefore they are yet alive, and have a real Existence.

2. Nay farther, if you deny Scripture's consequences, you can never justify many of your own practices; shew me an express Command in Scripture for praying twice a day in your Families, for saying Grace before and after Meat, for Womens receiving the Lord's Supper, for changing the Sabbath. Shew me a Text (say) you that says, remember to baptize Infants; shew me a Text (say I) that says, remember to keep Holy the first Day of the Week.

Will you say that Christ being Lord of the Sabbath, had Power to change the Day? The same say I: Christ being Lord of his own House has Power to change the Seal of the Covenant from Circumcision to Baptism; so for Womens receiving the Lord's Supper, will you say, that they are included tho' not named, for all Christ's Disciples ought to partake of Christ's Supper; But Women are his Disciples, therefore to partake of his Supper; and is not the Argument as strong, all Christ's Disciples ought to be baptized? But some Children are his Disciples, therefore to be baptized: Children are his Disciple, 1st. By the Scriptures Denomination, *Acts* 15.

v. 1, 8, 10. 2. By their Parents dedication of them to Christ. 3. By their Parents Education of them for Christ. 4. By Christ's gracious Acceptation of them at their Parents Hands, *S. Mark* 10. 13.

2. *Arg.* If the Infants of Believing Christians, under the Gospel, are in Covenant with God, as the Jewish Infants under the Law were, then the Seal of the Covenant (which is Baptism) may, and ought to be apply'd to them.

But the Infants of Believers under the Gospel are in Covenant with God, as well as the Jewish Infants under the Law were.

Therefore Baptism, the Seal of the Covenant, ought to be apply'd to these, as Circumcision was to them.

They who by Circumcision, were once solemnly ta-

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ken into Covenant with God, and never since were solemnly cast out, do undoubtedly continue in a Covenant state. But Infants under the Law, were solemnly by God's appointment taken into Covenant with himself, and were never since, by any command of God, cast out; therefore they do still continue in Covenant.

That Infants under the Law were by special appointment from God taken into Covenant with himself, is evident, from *Gen. 17. 7.* where God says thus to *Abraham*, *I will establish my Covenant betwixt Me and Thee, and thy Seed after Thee in their Generation, to be a God unto Thee and to thy Seed*: Whence it evidently appears, that under the Old Testament, Children were in Covenant with God, together with their Parents, and the New Testament speaks as plainly that they are still in Covenant, *Acts 2. 39. The Promise* (that, is the Promise of the Covenant) *is unto you and to your Seed*. The Apostle says not, the Promise was unto you and to your Seed, but is unto you and your Seed. Again, if Infants were in Covenant with God under the Law, but are now cast out by Christ under the Gospel, then these absurdities follow;

1. Then Infants are in a worse condition since the coming of Christ than they were before, and are losers by him, instead of being gainers; and altho' the number of Infants since Christ's coming, has been many thousand times greater than before his coming, yet was their condition better under *Moses* than under *Christ*, according to your Opinion.

2. Then the Privileges of the Gospel are straighter & narrower than those of the Law, which in the Judgment of judicious *Calvin* is a degree of Blasphemy to affirm; surely the design of our Saviour's coming was not to confine the Church to narrower limits, and to curtail her Privileges, but to extend and enlarge them; and accordingly the Scripture every where shews that the Privileges of Christians under the Gospel, do infinitely excel theirs under the Law, not only in spirituality and liveliness, but also in extent and largeness.

3. Far-

3. Farther yet, if it was the Will of God that Infants under the Gospel should be reckoned as out of his Covenant, who before were in Covenant with him, then it follows that our Saviour was forgetful or unfaithful to his Church, in that he never acquainted her with this Alteration. Can we reasonably suppose that he would not have inform'd his Apostles, when he sent them forth to gather a Church unto him out of all Nations; that it was his Father's pleasure, that Children should not now be lookt upon as Church-members, altho' they had ever been accounted so before. Doubtless Christ the great Prophet of his Church, would have reveal'd such a considerable part of his Father's will unto his Apostles, if it had been such; but not one word by way of prohibition do we find in all the New Testament; from whence we may conclude that Christ's not repealing the Practice of initiating Infants, nor forbidding their admission into the Christian Church by Baptism, is a sufficient Demonstration that it was his pleasure, that they should continue in their former condition of Church-membership; and consequently be baptized. Before I end this Argument, let me suggest one thing more to your Consideration; namely, what a mighty stumbling-block this Doctrine of the *Anabaptists* lays in the way of the Jews Conversion to Christianity; will this encourage a Jew to embrace the Religion of Jesus, to tell him of the high and glorious Privileges that he shall be interested in himself, upon his believing on him, but as for his Children they must be cast out, and numbred with Heathens and Infidels; and accounted as incapable of Baptism, the sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace, as dogs and swine; let it be considered how this opinion would invincibly prejudice a Jewish parent against the embracing of *Christianity*.

And how would this opinion also fill the mouths of Jewish Children, with clamorous & passionate complaint against Christianity; as the most rigorous & unkind dispensation, for after this manner we may conceive the child

Child of a Jew to expostulate his own condition. Alas! how sad is my estate like to be, if my Father a Jew by nature becomes a Christian by Profession? He was at eight days old made a Member of the Church by Circumcision, his Infancy was no bar to render him incapable of the Covenant Blessing; but now if my Father becomes a Christian, my condition as *I* am his Child will be impaired, though his condition be improved; for a Christian Child is found in a worse condition than a Jews Child is left; Christianity may indeed be a good Religion for Men to die in; but surely Judaism was better for Children to be born in, for it seems the Alteration of our Condition, since the coming of the Messiah is much for the worse.

In a word, all good men desire and pray for the Jews Conversion, and *I* hope so do the *Anabaptists* also; but it is evident, that this their rigid opinion concerning the Infants of Christian Parents, if duly considered, lays a mighty stumbling-block in the way of the Jews Conversion.

Objection against the second Argument.

Now that which the *Anabaptists* object against the foregoing Argument for Baptizing Infants, drawn from their Covenant-state, is this, namely, that the Covenant which God made with *Abraham*, *Gen. 17.* in which he promised to be a God to Him and his Seed: was not a Covenant of Grace, but of works only. A carnal covenant, promising carnal things only; as the Land of *Canaan*, and such like temporal Blessings. To which Objection of theirs, *I* return a threefold reply.

1. *I* affirm, that the Covenant which God made with *Abraham*, *Gen. 17.* was most certainly a Covenant of Grace, as plainly appear to Me three ways. (1.) From the Language and Expression of it. (2.) From the Duration and continuance of it. (3.) From the Blessings and Benefits conveyed by it.

Observe 1. The Language and Expression of it, *Gen.*

I will be a God unto Thee, and to Thy Seed after

thee: Now is not this a pure Gospel-phrase, and shews

it to be a covenant made with *Abraham* in Christ; I pray! how comes Almighty God (who upon the breach of the Covenant of Works, made with us in *Adam*, became our enraged Enemy) to be a God unto fallen man, any other ways than by a Mediatour, who is Jesus Christ, called the Angel of the covenant: If then it was a covenant made with *Abraham* in Christ, it must necessarily be a covenant of Grace, for Almighty God was never in a covenant of Friendship with any man since the Fall, but in and through Jesus Christ; out of Whom he is a consuming Fire, but in him our Covenant-Friend, and most graciously reconciled Father.

Observe 2. The duration and continuance of this Covenant which Almighty God made with *Abraham*, the Lord calls it an everlasting Covenant, now the Covenant of works which God made with *Adam*, was but a short-lasting Covenant. I am aware that the *Hebrew* word for Everlasting, sometimes in Scripture, signifies no more than a long continuance of time; but when the Lord says, he will be a Persons God everlastingly, it denotes his being so to all Eternity; for whom the Lord loveth with a special Love, He loves unto the end, and without End.

Observe 3. The Blessings and Benefits convey'd by this Covenant which God made with *Abraham*, do prove it to be a Covenant of Grace. To be a God unto him and his Seed, and that everlastingly, is a most comprehensive Gospel Blessing; for hereby God gives a Person an Interest in all that he is, and in all that he has, so far as can be communicated to a creature. This Blessing promised to *Abraham* comprehends Christ, Grace and Holiness here, Glory and Happiness hereafter; and accordingly we find the Apostle, *Hebrews 8th.* uses the same Expression with this of Gods to *Abraham*, *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a People.*

2. I answer, that the Covenant which God makes with Believers now under the Gospel, is the very same for substance, with that which he made with *Abraham* under the

Old Testament, for *Abraham* is still the Father of the Faithful, and the believing *Gentiles*, under the Gospel, are as much his Seed, in God's account, as the *Jews* were under the Law; it is true, that the Administration of the Covenant is different now from what it was in *Abraham's* time, but the Covenant it self is the same; for observe, there never were but two ways of Life to Mankind; the one before the Fall, by perfect doing; the other since the fall, by sincere Believing and Obeying. Answerably hereunto, there can be but two Covenants betwixt God and Man; the Covenant of Works made with us in *Adam*, and the Covenant of Grace made with us in *Christ*; the last of these has past under various Administrations, according to the different ages of the Church; in *Abraham's* and the *Israelites* time 'twas more obscurely administred, under the Gospel 'tis more conspicuously and clearly manifested, but still the Covenant, for substance, then and now the same; when therefore the Apostle, in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, calls ours a better Covenant than the *Jews* were under, he means not for Substance, but for Clearness.

In a word, if the Covenant which God made with *Abraham* be a Covenant of Works, (as the *Anabaptists* affirm) how comes Circumcision, the Seal of that Covenant, to be call'd a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith, Rom. 4. 11. the Righteousness of Faith and Works being opposite?

3. I reply, that if the Covenant which God made with *Abraham* of old, and with us now, be one and the same Covenant of Grace, then our Infant-seed have a right to Baptism, the present Seal of the Covenant, as the Seed of *Abraham* had a right to Circumcision, the Seal of the Covenant of old; if Infants Church-Membership was no Absurdity then, it can be none now; if Children were in Covenant with God in *Abraham's* day, they are so at this day, unless we find that Almighty God has any where excluded them from his Grace and Favour; which doth not appear, but rather the contrary; for many Scriptures speak of the enlarging of our Privileges, under

This last and best Administration of the Covenant of Grace. If then Almighty God under the Old Testament vouchsafed it as a gracious privilege unto Infants, to be incorporated with their Parents, and to be accounted Members of his Church; they must be declared capable of the same privilege still, without an express prohibition from God himself to the contrary.

To sum up all then, that I judge needful to say upon this Argument; if the *Covenant* which God made with *Abraham* and his Seed, was a *Covenant* of Grace (as I hope clearly appears to you) and if the *Covenant* which God makes with us under the Gospel, be for substance the same with that which he made with *Abraham* of old; and if the Seal of the *Covenant* then, which was Circumcision, was applied by God's appointment to all his Infant-seed; then by the same parity of Reason, Baptism, which is the present Seal of the *Covenant* of Grace, ought to be applied to infants now, unless Almighty God has declared his pleasure to the contrary, which no where appears.

Arg. 3. If Infants are capable of spiritual benefit by Baptism, then baptism may and ought to be administered to Infants; if they are capable of the inward and invisible Grace, surely they may partake of the outward and Visible Sign: If the Word of the Promise doth belong to them, surely the Seal of the Promise ought not to be withheld from them.

But the former is true, namely, that Infants are capable of benefit by Baptism: Therefore the latter is true also, they ought to be baptized.

There are amongst others, Two special blessings and spiritual benefits, which Infants are capable of by Baptism; namely, the Remission of their Sins, and the Regeneration of their Natures.

1. Remission of Sin: This being an Act of merciful favour in God, discharging a Person from his obligation to Wrath, upon the score of guilt contracted.

An Infant is certainly as capable of this Act of Favour as a grown Man, tho' for the present he doth not understand either the worth or the want of it, Is not the Infant-Son of a Traitor as capable of benefit, by the King's gracious pardon, as the Father himself; an illustration will make it plain to you. Suppose the King should send for a Traitor's Child out of the Cradle, and before all his Courtiers declare, that whereas the Blood of that Child was attainted by its Father's Treason, and therefore according to Law, its whole Inheritance became forfeited to the Crown; yet, says the King, I will pardon this Infant freely, and restore him to all his forfeited Rights, & in token hereof, I command one of my Ministers to wash the Infant with pure water: Signifying thereby to all my Subjects, that he is cleansed from his Original Attainder and Corruption of Blood, and that I am perfectly reconciled to him.

I demand now, whether any one can truly say that this Action was insignificant to the Child, because he did not understand it; or will any say that the Child was incapable of washing, which was the sign, when it was capable of being acquitted from its Attainder, which was the thing signified thereby; if then Infants are capable of Remission of Sin, surely they are capable of Baptism, the Token of Remission, which is the great Truth that this illustration was brought to prove. But farther,

2. Infants while such, are no less capable of the Regeneration of their Natures, than they are of the Remission of their Sins, it being certain that no unclean thing can enter into Heaven, that none can be saved whose natures are not renewed; either the sanctifying Grace of God must be allowed Infants, or Salvation must be denied them. Regenerating Grace is called by St. John, the Seed of God. *1 Ep. ch. 3. 9.* Now, what hinders, but that the Soul of an Infant, may be as capable of this seed, as of a grown Person: For thus I argue:

If the Image of God, consisting in Holiness; was re-

ceived by the Soul in the first creation, without the Soul's contribution to the production of it; why may not the same Image of God be restored to the Soul in the new Creation, without the Soul's concurrence and co-operation to the Restitution of it? For why may not the Spirit of God produce in an Infant that imperfect Regeneration whereof we are now speaking, as well as he did that more perfect Holiness in which our first Parents were originally created?

What an high Affront then do these men give to the Omnipotency of the Holy Spirit, who affirm that it is as vain a thing to hope and pray that Almighty God should Regenerate an Infant with his Holy Spirit, as to expect that he shou'd illuminate a Stone or a Tree.

But if Infants are found capable subjects of regenerating Grace, and Remission of sin, (as I hope appears) then surely they are capable of Baptism; for the outward and visible sign ought not to be deny'd to such as are capable of the inward and spiritual Grace.

Objection against the third Argument.

But (say the opposers of Infant Baptism) Infants are by a natural incapacity rendred incapable of any spiritual benefit by baptism; therefore Baby-Baptism (as they scornfully call the Ordinance) is sinful in the Administration, and folly in the Administrator.

I Answer: This is the highest arrogancy imaginable, to make your selves wiser than God; will you say Almighty God acted foolishly in commanding *Isaac* to be circumcised, when he was under as natural an incapacity to answer the end of Circumcision, as our children are to apprehend the reason of Baptism; Why do you not then call it a Baby-Circumcision? Verily if your argument has any force, it rises up against Infant-Circumcision as well as against Infant-Baptism, because Circumcision was instituted for the same end that Baptism is, and the person circumcised was under the same natural incapacity with the Person baptized: Neither one, nor the other, understood

flood what was done unto them, the Jewish Infants only felt the pain of the circumcising Knife, as our infants feel the coldness of the baptismal Water, but neither of them were capable of understanding the significancy of the Ordinance. I am aware of the frivolous Objection, which you make to evade the force of this argument, by saying, that Circumcision was more proper for children than Baptism, because it left an indelible character upon the child, and imprinted a significant mark upon its flesh, which did not wear out; whereas baptism is a transient Sign, and leaves no mark upon the Forehead of the baptized child.

But there is no force at all in this Objection, because tho' Circumcision did leave a mark upon the child's flesh, yet the circumcised child did not understand what that mark signify'd till it was grown up and instructed by the Parent, no more than the baptized child knows the reason of its baptismal washing, till the Parent acquaints it with the Mystery of it; so that the case is the very same. What does baptism (say you) avail before the infant is capable of understanding the Nature, use, and end of it? What did the mark, imprinted on the childrens flesh, in circumcision (say I) profit them, before the Parent instructed them, that it was the Token of God's covenant with them? So that according to your way of reasoning, Circumcision and Baptism ought both to have been deferred till years of Discretion; which, as I hinted before, is to make your selves wiser than God, who knows better than you, when to time the application of his own Ordinances.

But let us hear your Reasons, why infants are altogether incapable of benefit by baptism.

Because say you, (1.) they want actual Faith and Repentance, (2.) because they are not capable of Ministerial Teaching.

You Object, that children have not actual faith, and consequently cannot make a visible Profession of their

Believing in Christ, which is the condition required in order to Baptism; *He that Believeth and is Baptized, shall be Saved, &c. St. Mark 16. 16.*

I Answer, that a Profession of actual Faith is necessarily required before Baptism in all Adult-persons, that is, Persons grown to riper years, who are the Persons whom our Saviour meant, when he said, *He that Believeth and is baptized, shall be saved*; as most evidently appears by the following words, *He that believeth not shall be damned.* What? must all that die in their infancy, go to Hell for an impossibility? The Text only intends such as by hearing the Gospel preached are capable of actual Faith; such as enjoy the means of Faith, and yet live and die in the neglect of Faith, and contempt of Baptism, shall certainly be damned, *2 Thess. 3. 10.* Says the Apostle, *If any man will not work, let him not eat*; that is, such as are capable of working, must work; but must Children be starved, because they cannot labour? Thus here, Children lie under a natural incapacity of professing actual Faith, therefore the first Text does not concern them, any more than the latter.

Obj. But say you, because Children are incapable of Knowledge and Faith at present, therefore ought they not to be baptized at present.

I Reply, Children are capable of present Benefit by Baptism, tho' they do not at present understand and believe, to make it plain to you by a familiar Comparison: Suppose there was a great Plague in this your Town, and Almighty God should miraculously call eleven or twelve Men, and communicate to them a Medicine against the Plague, and bid them teach you the Inhabitants the Virtues of this Medicine: Assuring you, that he that believeth and taketh the Remedy shall live, but he that believeth and receiveth it not shall die.

I demand, whither according to the Mind of God gathered from the Words of this Commission, the dy prescribed should be administered only to grown

sons,

sons, because they only are capable of understanding, and believing the Virtue and Efficacy of it; certainly every rational Man among you would conclude his Child capable of the Remedy as well as himself, altho' ignorant of the Virtue that is in it, and only passive in the administration of it: and that it would be cruelty, yea murder in the Parent to deny the Application of it to all his Children.

2. I Answer, that tho' Children have not actual, yet they have habitual Faith; Faith in *Semine*, and so are potentially Believers; as for instance, Infants have not the use of Reason, yet because they have the principle of Reason, we call them reasonable *Creatures*, the first day they are born. Thus Infants whilest such, have not the use and exercise of Faith, but they have it in the Root, tho' not in the Fruit, and so may be called Believers initially.

Add to this, that Infants being born within the bosom of the Church of Believing Parents, the Faith of the Parent is to them (at present) instead of an outward profession in their own Persons; and thus they have *Fidem Fœderis*, tho' not *Fidem Fœderatorum*; as the Learned *Prideaux* speaks, for tho' no Child is saveable by its Parents Faith, yet the Child of a Believer is baptizable by virtue of its Parents Faith; because the Parent receives the Promise of God both for himself and for his Seed, *Act. 2. 3. 9.* and why may not Children be stiled Believers with respect to their Parents Faith, as well as they are stiled Saints (*ἀγιοι*) with respect to their Parents Profession, *1 Cor. 7. 14.*

2. Your 2d. Objection against my 3d. Argument, is this: Infants are not capable of Ministerial Teaching; therefore not of baptismal Washing; because Teaching must go before Baptizing, according to the order of the Words in our Saviours Commission, *St. Mat. 28. v. 19. Go Teach and Baptize all Nations.*

1. I answer, it is a mighty weakness to infer from the order of the words, the necessary order of things. *St. Mat.* sets Teaching before Baptizing, but *St.*

Mark sets baptizing before teaching, *Ch. 1. ver. 4.* So that no conclusive Argument can be drawn from thence either way. But,

2. Observe the true Reason why Christ bid his Disciples first Teach and then Baptize, because he was now sending his Apostles forth amongst the Heathen, to convert them to Christianity; in which Work we all know that the Preaching of the Word must go before the Administration of the Sacraments. Should the King of *England* send his Ministers into Forreign Plantations, to convert the *Indians* to Christianity; They ought not to be Baptized before they are taught and instructed, but when the Parents are Profelyted and make a Visible Profession of their Faith, their Children may be baptized, and afterwards instructed, as the Children of the Jewish *Profelytes* were first Circumcised, and then Taught; for tho' *Abraham* was first Taught, and then Circumcised, yet *Isaac* was first circumcised, and then taught. So that the sense of our Saviour is this: Teach such as are capable of teaching, and baptize such as are capable of Baptism.

I will illustrate the matter to you by a plain similitude. Suppose a Person, owner of a great Flock of Sheep, should command his Sheperd, to shear all his Sheep, and give them an Ear-mark to know them by, should the Sheperd shear the Sheep, and only mark them, and leave out all the Lambs, (which perhaps made up half the fold) unmark'd, can the Sheperd be supposed to have done his duty? Suppose he says, the Lambs were very young, and incapable of Shearing; true, says the Owner, but were they not capable of Marking?

Infants, say you, are not capable of Teaching; but are they not capable of Christ's Ear-mark, (Baptism) by which Christ's Sheep are distinguished from the Devil's Goats? But, according to your principles, Christ's Fold has no Lambs in it, but all Sheep; such a fold a

World never yet heard of. See *Isa. 40. 7. 11.*

4. *Agr.* If Infants be capable of Christ's blessing on Earth, and of his presence in Heaven: if they be subjects of his Kingdom of Grace, and heirs of his Kingdom of Glory; then, they have an undoubted Right to the privilege of Subjects, amongst which Baptism the Seal of the Covenant is not the least.

Or take the Argument thus.

Those whom Christ invites to him, and are received by him, his Ministers may not refuse, nor put from them. But Infants are by Christ invited to him, and when such, received by him: Therefore the Ministers of Christ, may not, ought not, durst not refuse to receive them into communion with them. Again, if there be no other ordinary way of coming to Christ now, but by Admission into the Church of Christ: Then the Ministers of the Church ought not to exclude those whom Christ invites: But there is no other ordinary way now of coming to Christ, but by Admission into the Church of Christ: Therefore none must be excluded whom Jesus Christ has graciously invited.

For the proof of this Argument, I appeal to the Words of our Saviour himself, *St. Mark 10. 13. Suffer little Children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.* That is, my Kingdom of Grace, my Church on Earth, and my Kingdom of Glory in Heaven consists of Sucking Children, (so the Original word signifies) as well as grown Persons. From whence I thus Argue: Does Christ take Children into his Arms: and shall his Church cast them out of her embrace?

Does Christ own them for Subjects of his Kingdom, and shall we allow them no better standing than in the Devil's Kingdom?

Does the spirit of Christ call the Infant-seed of Believers Holy: and shall we prophanelly call them common and unclean, like the seed of infidels and unbelievers?

Shall we allow them no other Privilege by being Born

born of Christian Parents, than what the Children of *Turks* and *Infidels* do enjoy?

Can any Wise or good Man believe that our Saviour would speak such favourable words of Infants, and by his outward gesture manifest so much good will towards them, only with an intent to insinuate and deceive us; Doubtless it was to encourage his Ministers and Ambassadors to perform all charitable Offices towards them: and pursuant to such encouragement I will much rather chiope to answer my Lord and Saviour at the great Day for admitting hundreds of Infants of Pious Parents into his Church by Baptism, than for keeping one out: For if Christ denies them not the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the greater, what reason have I to deny them Baptism, which is the less? Therefore, as *Calvin* very well observes upon the place, 'tis no less than audacious Sacrilege in the Ministers of Christ to drive them from his Sheep-fold, which he so lovingly owns to be a part of his Flock. And altho' I do, and even desire, to bear a loving and charitable Mind towards the Persons of the *Anabaptists*, yet cannot I be reconciled to their unkind and uncharitable Opinion, which robs Parents of their Comfort, Infants of their Right, the Church of its Members, and God of his Glory.

Objection against the fourth Argument.

1. *Obj.* Say you, we read that Christ blessed these Children, but we find not that he baptized them.

Ans. Our Saviour baptized not any himself, therefore no wonder that he did not baptize Infants; but his praying for them, his blessing of them, and declaring that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them, was a great deal more than if he had baptized them: besides being capable of *Christ's* blessing, they were capable also of baptism, being purely passive in both; and if these Children were not baptized now, yet they had now an unquestionable Right to Baptism.

2. *Obj.* But we do not read that ever the Disciples baptized these Children afterwards.

Ans.

Answ. Perhaps they were baptized before : but if not, does it follow that the Apostles did not baptize these Children because we have no mention of it ? The Scripture no where tells us that the Apostles themselves were baptized ; shall we therefore conclude that they were never baptized ?

3. *Obj.* But say you, if Infants have a right to baptism, because Christ says, *Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven* ; Then it follows as well that they have a Right to the Lord's Supper, and ought to be Communicated as well as Baptized.

Answ. There is not the same reason, because, 1. Almighty God requires a particular qualification to fit a Person for the Lord's Supper, which Infants are not capable of. Namely, the exercise of actual Grace in self-examination, in discerning the Lord's Body, and remembering the Death of Christ. 2. The different nature of the Sacraments, hints to us a special difference in this case, for Baptism being a Sacrament of Initiation, or admission into the Visible Church, Persons of all Ages are capable of it ; but the Lord's Supper being a Sacrament of Confirmation, and the means of our Spiritual growth in Christ requires some standing in the Church, and strength of Stomack, and so is the proper Ordinance for grown Christians. And accordingly you may observe, that altho' the Jewish Infants at eight days Old were capable of Circumcision : yet their Children never were admitted to the Passover before they were able to go up to the Temple, to enquire about the meaning, and understand the reason of that service. In like manner when our Children are Old enough to understand the Nature of the Lord's Supper, and are capable of performing the Duties required in order to a worthy participation of the Ordinance, they may then be admitted to it : but not before.

Arg. If the Infants of Christian Parents are sedulously, then are they Subjects qualified for Baptism.

But

But the Scripture pronounces such Children federally Holy: therefore they are qualified for Baptism, and may be admitted to it.

See two Texts of Scripture for the proof of this Argument.

1. Text, *Rom. 11. 16. If the Root be Holy, the Branches are also Holy*; where by the Root we are to understand the Old Testament-Saints, *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*; & by the Branches, their Posterity, the People of the *Jews*. This Root is said to be Holy in regard of the Promise, which was made to them and their Seed.

Now forasmuch, as the *Jews*, the Natural Branches are for unbelief broken off, and the believing *Gentiles* are grafted in their stead, and succeed in their Privileges in the sense that they were Holy, so are we, namely, not with an internal and inherent Holiness, passing by natural Generation from Parent to Child, but with an External, Relative, Covenant-Holiness, grounded on the Promise made to the Faithful and their Seed.

2. Text is, *1 Cor. 7. 14. The unbelieving Wife is Sanctified by the believing Husband, &c. else were your Children unclean, but now are they Holy.*

Which words, are *St. Paul's* answer to the *Corinthians* scruple; whether such as had Heathen and Infidel Wives, ought not to put them away with their Children, as in the days of *Ezra*; the Apostle resolves them, that they ought not; for (says he) the Unbelieving Wife is sanctified to the Believing Husband; how sanctified? Not in her Nature, but in her Use. So as that they might lawfull Cohabite and converse together; and for your Children they are Holy, not with an Inherent, Internal Personal Holiness, for the Holiest Man-child is born in Sin, and by Nature a Child of Wrath: But with an External, Relative, Federal Holiness, they are not common and unclean, like the Children of Infidels; but to be partakers of the Privileges of the Church, and of to be admitted by Baptism into the Church, which the Children of Infidels are not.

Objection.

Objection against the Fifth Argument.

That which the Opposers of Infant Baptism object against this Argument is this, that the Apostle, in 1 Cor. 7. 14. intends a Matrimonial Holiness; your Children are Holy, that is (say they) they are legitimate and not bastards. To which I answer, that this is not interpreting, but a racking of the Scriptures, to maintain a private Opinion; it is to make the Scripture speak what you think, and not what the Apostle intends; for according to this interpretation of the word Holy, the Apostle spake neither pertinently nor truly.

1. Not pertinently, for his Answer had been nothing to the purpose; the case put, was concerning Husbands and Wives, not concerning Men and Whores; and the Question propounded was not, Whether the *Corinthians* were lawful Man and Wife, (no body doubted that,) but whether the Christian Husband might put away his Heathen Wife: The Apostle answers, that he ought not, if she were willing to continue and dwell with him; for, says he, the Wife (tho' an unbelieving Heathen) is sanctified to her Christian Husband; not sanctify'd in respect of her personal condition, but in respect of her conjugal relation; for tho' she be unclean in the sight of God, yet she is sanctified in a way of marriage to her believing Husband; *Because to the Pure, all things are pure; otherwise* (says the Apostle) your children wou'd be unclean, as the children of Heathens are, but now are they Holy; that is, to be accounted visible Saints, till they profess the contrary, and as such to be admitted to Church-Privileges.

2. According to this interpretation of the word [Holy] the Apostle had not spoken truly; for the children of Heathens born in lawful Wedlock, are no more bastards than the children of Christians, their Parents Marriage frees them surely from the charge of illegitimacy, as well as

And to this, that in all the New Testament, the word [Holy] tho' it be used above five hundred times, yet ne-

ver signifies Legitimacy, but is always used for a state of separation to God: take one instance instead of many, St. Paul in the Inscriptions of his Epistles directs (*τοῖς ἁγίοις*) To the Saints or Holy ones, at Rome and Corinth, &c. Now according to these Mens interpretation of the word (Saints) the Apostles meaning should be this, to all that are not Bastards and unlawfully Begotten at Rome and Corinth, &c. unless they will say, that the word Saint, when applied to grown Men does signifie Holy, but when applied to Children, must signifie Legitimate; but here they are extreemly out in their Logick, for every Fresh-man can tell them, that *magis & minus non variant speciem*. I must say therefore, that forasmuch as the word (Holy) in all other places in the New-Testament, doth signifie Dedication or Separation to an Holy use: to make it in this place, (*viz.* 1 Cor. 7. 14.) to signifie Legitimation, is a bold practising upon the Scriptures; and men instead of bringing their Opinions to the touchstone of the Scriptures, do wrest and rack the Scriptures to favour their Opinions.

6. *Arg.* That which has been the constant and Immemorial Practice of the Church of God in all Ages of the World is unquestionably an Ordinance of God, and agreeable to his Will. But Infant-initiation, or the Admission of Infants into the Jewish Church by Circumcision, and into the Christian Church by Baptism, has been the immemorial Practice of the Universal Church from the days of *Abraham* to this day. Therefore it is undeniably an Ordinance of God, and agreeable to his will.

That Infants under the Old Testament were admitted into the Jewish Church by Circumcision; none will deny, and that Infants also under the New Testament were entered into the Christian Church by Baptism: Appears to me very plain, (1.) From the command of *God*. (2.) From the Practice of the Apostles. (3.) From the constant usage of the Primitive Church after the Apostles.

1. That Infants were to be admitted into the Christian Church, appears from our Saviours express Command in the words of the Commission: *St. Matthew 28. ver. 19. Go Disciple all Nations, Baptizing them.* That is, go and Profelyte all the Gentile Nations, without any Distinction of Country, Sex, or Age whatsoever, make the Gospel Church as large as you can. Doubtless had our Saviour here intended the exclusion of Infants out of the Visible Church, which had all along been included, his faithfulness to his Church would have oblig'd him to acquaint her with this alteration, Christ being faithful to him that appointed him, as *Moses* was faithful in all his House, *Heb. 3. ver. 2.*

2. Baptizing Infants appears in the Christian Church from the practice of the Apostles, who baptized whole Families; *Lydia* and her Household, *Acts 16. 15.* the *Jaylour* & all his, *Acts 16. 33.* How reasonable is it to believe that there were Children in those Families as parts of the Household, for the word House and Household in Scripture signifies Children eminently, *Psal. 127. 1.* hence it is observable, that the same word in *Hebrew* signifies a Son and an House: Because Children (under God) do build up the house, and keep up the name of the Fathers Family, and accordingly the Apostle directing a Bishop to rule his House well, presently names Children as the most considerable part of his charge and care, *1 Tim. 3. 4.*

Obj. 1. But say you, we do not find that *Lydia* had any Children, therefore (the Scripture being silent) we may as well suppose that *Lydia* had no Children, as you suppose that she had.

Ans. Neither doth the Scripture name any Husband that *Lydia* had, or any Servant in her House, nor any of her Kindred or acquaintance that were with her: So that your argument runs thus. The Scripture mentions no Children in *Lydia's* House when she was baptized, therefore *Lydia* had no Children; Thus then will I argue. The Scripture mentioneth neither Husband, nor Child,

Child, nor Servant, nor Kins-folk, nor Friend, nor Neighbour in *Lydia's* House. Therefore there was none: So then, *Lydia* and her House was baptiz'd, that is, *Lydia* and her self.

Obj. 2. But you will say, suppose *Lydia* had children, and the Jaylor also, how does it appear that they were now baptized, and not afterwards, when they came to Riper Years.

Ans. The Text says, they and theirs were baptized straightway, which implies strongly that their Baptism was not delay'd, but presently perform'd; nor do we any where read that either *Lydia's*, or the Jaylor's children were baptized afterwards,

Search the Scriptures and produce me one instance if you can, from the time of *St. John the Baptist*, to the Death of *St. John the Evangelist*, which was more than threescore Years; during which time many thousands of Infants were grown up to maturity, and make it appear that they were not baptized in their Infancy, or that their Baptism was deferr'd till Riper years, or that there is any divine Command for the delaying the Baptism of the Children of Christian Parents, untill they are grown up, and I will frankly yield the Cause.

3. We meet with early mention of the baptizing of Infants in the Primitive Church after the Apostles, so early that none could ever yet define or declare, when the practice began; which shews it to be Apostolical; and accordingly the Churches practice in baptizing Infants, altho' it has been disputed by particular persons, yet was never censured, much less condemned by any regular Society or Body of Christians since the Apostles days.

He that desires to see a cloud of Witnesses out of Antiquity, for the Practice of baptizing Infants in the Primitive Church, may consult the Learned *Vossius*, in his *Historical Theses de Baptismo*, to his ample satisfaction. It may be sufficient for this Auditory that I only produce the Testimony of two very ancient Fathers, *St. Irenaeus*,
St. Cyprian,

Irenæus and St. Cyprian, who lived very near the Apostles times, and therefore may be supposed very well to understand the practice of the Apostles.

1. The former speaks thus; *Omnes venit Christus per semetipsum salvare, omnes qui per eum renascuntur ad Deum, Infantes & Parvulos, Juniores & Seniores.* St. Iren. lib. II. cap. 39. That is, *Jesus Christ came to save all by himself; all, I say, who by him are born again unto God, Infants and little Ones, Young and Old*: By Infants being born again unto God must be understood, either their being born of Water, or their being born of the Spirit; if their being born of Water be intended, then it is plain they were Baptized; if it be understood of their being born of the Spirit, then it follows that they were capable of being born of Water, that is, of being Baptized; for such as are capable of the thing signified, are certainly capable of the sign.

2. The second Authority is that of St. Cyprian in his Epistle to Fidus, ep. 58. *Fidus* a Presbyter had Written to St. Cyprian his Bishop to desire his Judgment about Baptizing Infants before the eighth Day: the question was not about the Lawfulness of Baptizing them, but about the Circumstance of time, whether before the eighth day, according to the usage in Circumcision; St. Cyprian returns him this Answer, *That both himself and the Council with him, which consisted of 66. Bishops, had unanimously determined that a Child might be Baptised as soon as it was born.* Adding these words, *Nulli hominum Nato, misericordiam & gratiam Dei denegandam esse*, that is, the Mercy and Grace of God, (dispensed by Baptism) is to be denied to no Child of Man, namely upon the account of its Age. After which, another Council, that at *Milevis*, decreed thus: *Quicumque parvulos recentes ab uteris matrum Baptizandos esse negat, Anathema sit*: he that denys Infants to be Baptized as soon as they come out of their Mothers Wombs, let him be an *Anathema*. But that I may fully satisfy you my Auditors (few of whom are capable of searching Antiquity) instead of further Testimonies from the Ancients, I will produce

produce four Arguments, which to me are convincing Demonstrations, that Children in the Primitive times were Baptized in their Infancy.

1. *Demonst.* If Children in the Primitive times were confirm'd in their Minority, then they were undoubtedly Baptized in their Infancy: But the former is true: Therefore the latter.

That Confirmation was an Apostolical practice the Scripture plainly intimates, *Hebr. 6. v. 2.* The Doctrine of Baptism and of laying on of Hands, &c. *Hic locus ad paedobaptismi Approbationem facit*, says Calvin. This place (says he) makes for Infant Baptism; and how does it make for it, but thus? If persons were Confirm'd in their minority (that is, as soon as they were capable of giving account of their faith, to the Church) then they were Baptized in their Infancy.

Quest. But what was this Practice of Confirmation, say you, is it not Antichristian, and does it not smell of Popery?

Ans. Altho' the Church of Rome has corrupted and abused it, by making it a Sacrament, and in some respects Superiour to Baptism, yet is this no just disparagement of it, for if we consider Confirmation in its Primitive Purity and Practice, it will appear a very useful Ordinance in the Church of Christ. The Original of it thus:

In the Primitive Church there were two sorts of *Catechumeni*; that is, Persons Catechized and Instructed in the Christian Religion; the first were (*extranei*) that is, Persons without the pale of the Visible Church, *Heathens* and *Infidels* by birth: Now these were first Taught, and then Baptized; first instructed in the faith, and afterwards Baptized into that Holy Faith they were instructed: in the second sort were *Confederati*, that is, the Children of believing Parents, who being born within the Visible Church, were look'd upon as Members of it: and Baptized in their Infancy. These being unable to make a Confession of their Faith before Baptism, as they grew up, they were Catechized and Instructed in the Faith, which they had in their Infancy been Baptized into.

And

And when they were able to give an account of their Faith, they came into the publick Congregation, and made an open Confession of it before the Church. Ratifying by their own voluntary consent, that Covenant which they had entred into with Almighty God at their Baptism, and taking that Promise upon themselves which their Sureties had made on their behalf when they were Baptized. And thus by Prayer and Imposition of Hands, they were received in *Ecclesiam Adultorum*, and so were admitted to the Lord's Supper; and thus by a regular Transition they past out of a state of Infant Membership into a state of Adult Membership, by a personal owning of their Baptismal Covenant.

Now the usefulness of Confirmation, according to its first Institution and Primitive Practice will appear many ways.

1. By this means, that much neglected and despised Ordinance of Catechising would be brought into more frequent use, and greater esteem in the Church.

2. Hereby Parents would be excited, and Children quickened to seek after knowledge, that they may be able to give an account of that Faith, which they are Baptized into.

3. By this means a Sovereign remedy would be provided against the malady of mixt Communion: ignorant and scandalous persons would hereby be kept from Communion with the Church in that Venerable Ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

2. *Demonst.* If Children in their Infancy in the Primitive times were admitted to the Lord's Supper, then they were certainly fore-admitted to Baptism, for no sort of Christians ever admitted any Unbaptized persons knowingly to the Lords Table. But we find in the Writings of the Ancient Fathers, particularly St. Cyprian and St. Augustin, several Pleas for Childrens receiving the Lord's Supper, amongst which one of the chief was grounded on *John 6. 53. Except ye eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, ye have no Life in you.*

I know the opposers of Infant Baptism will reply, that this was an erroneous Opinion and Practice; and I

do not pretend to justify it. But doubtless the Practice of Infant Communion may confirm any reasonable Man in the belief of the practice of Infant Baptism, because none could be Communicated before they were Baptized.

And therefore the practice of giving the Sacrament to Infants, which was in use of Old, (and as I have read, is still in use in the Greek Church at this day) is a most Emphatical Demonstration that those Churches were, and are of Opinion, that Infant Baptism is as Lawful and Valid as that of Persons of riper years.

3. *Demonst.* If the Ancient Fathers brought the Baptizing of Infants as an argument against Hereticks, to prove the Doctrine of Original Sin, then certainly the Practice of Infant Baptism was anciently in the Church.

But we find the great St. *Augustine*, &c. in their Disputations against *Pelagius*, (who boldly of Old, as many of the *Anabaptists* do at this day, denied the Doctrine of Original Sin) producing the Baptism of Infants as an Argument to prove them born in Sin.

Therefore there must be such a Practice in the Primitive Church as Baptizing Infants, acknowledged. This *Pelagius* was an Heretick about the year 400. born in *Brittain* on the same day on which St. *Austin* was born in *Africa*. (Providence so ordering it, that the Poyson and the Antidote should be Twins in respect of Time.) Amongst other of his Heresies this was one, That Infants were born without Original Sin: St. *Austin* demanded of him the reason why the Church did then Baptize Infants, for, says he, what is clean already, needs not to be washed.

Now thus I argue, If Infant Baptism was not an Apostolical Tradition, or were derivable from any thing less than Apostolical Practice, how came it to pass that the *Pelagians* did not reject it for an Innovation, when it was urged as an Argument against them: It had been easie for them (if there had been any grounds for it) to have denied the practice of Baptizing Infants: or to have shewn that it was brought in by the false Apo-

files. But the *Pelagians* were so far from doing this, that they Baptized Infants themselves, and owned that tho' it was not necessary for Remission of Original Sin, (because as they thought Infants had none) yet they adjudg'd it needful for Childrens obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven, and accordingly did Baptize them.

4. *Demonst.* If it was a gross Error in the Primitive Church, to admit Infants to Baptism; then the Primitive Fathers in suffering such an Error to pass uncensured and uncondemned, were guilty of the greatest Impiety and Hypocrisie. For what was this but to connive at a Mock-Baptism, and to make many Millions of Mock-Christians? We find the Ancient Fathers smartly Writing against other Heresies, that had crept in, in their days, as the Heresie of the *Gnosticks*, *Marcionites* and *Manichees*: but not one word against the Error of Infant Baptism, and yet we are fully assured that it was in use in their time.

And can we imagine that the Holy Ghost should not preserve one Church amongst so many, from falling into such a pernicious Error; but suffer the Universal Church for 1600 years together to persist and continue in a sinful Practice, if indeed it were such, for not only the Primitive Church in the first Centuries, but all the Reformed Churches in these last Ages, and at this day, do in all their Confessions of Faith declare their belief of the Doctrine of Infant Baptism, and do practise accordingly.

1. The Church of *England* Art. 27. says thus: The Baptism of young Children, is in any wise to be Retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

2. The French Church speaks thus: Infants that are born of Holy Parents, ought to be Baptized by Christ's Authority.

3. The Dutch Confession thus: We believe that Children ought to be Baptized under the Gospel, as they were

were Circumcised under the Law ; for as much as the same promises were made to them, and to us.

4. The Church of *Bohemians* says, Children ought to be dedicated to Christ, &c. according to his Command, *Mark* 10. 13.

5. The Church of *Helvetia* says, We Condemn the Doctrine of the *Anabaptists*, which deny Baptism to the Children of Believers, who are in Covenant with God, &c.

With many more to be seen in *Corp. Confes. Fid. Eccl. Ref*

Now if the *Anabaptists* can believe, that Almighty God has suffered all his Churches, Ancient and Modern, and that in all parts of the World, to fall into one and the same Church-destroying Practice : They have a Power which I shall never envy them, namely, of Believing what they please.

Having thus (Satisfactorily, I hope) Evidenced to you the lawfulness of Infant Baptism : I proceed now to the second part of my Province, to Manifest the usefulness of that Ordinance in general, and to Demonstrate that it is much more useful to Baptize a person in Infancy, than when grown to years of Understanding. Infant-Baptism, say the *Anabaptists*, is unlawful, because it is useless : Children, say they, understand no more than Brute Beasts, what is done unto them : Therefore you may as warrantably Baptize a Beast, as a Child. Here therefore I shall endeavour these two Points : (1.) Assert the usefulness of Infant Baptism in General : And then (2.) Prove, that it is much more Useful and Advantageous to Baptize a Child in its Infancy, than to omit it until grown to years of Understanding.

I shall Assert and Prove the Usefulness of Infant-Baptism in General, that it is of mighty Advantage to Infants these three ways : (1.) As it is an Act of Initiation : (2.) As it is an Act of Dedication : (3.) As it is an Act of Restipulation.

1. Infant-baptism is greatly Advantageous, as it is an Act of Initiation, that is, a Solemn Admission of the party Baptized into the visible Church : It is an Ordinance

by which Babes are Matriculated and Adopted into the House of their Father, and taken into the Arms of their Mother: Hence Baptism is called by the Ancients, *Ecclesia janua, gratiae porta*, the Gate of the Church, and the Door of Grace: And for that Reason, they had their *Baptisteria*, their Fonts or places for Baptism erected near the entrance, and not far from the Door of the Church: Now this Admission into the Church being an Act of Favour and Divine Indulgence, Children as well as grown Men are capable of it. As for Instance: Suppose a Prince should take a Beggars Child, and Adopt him into his Family, and settle a part of his Dominions upon him, and to Solemnize and Confirm this, should command the Child to be Washed with pure Water, who durst deny the Child to be capable of this Act of Favour, and of Advantage by it? In like manner our Children now being as capable as the Jewish Children heretofore of the Sacrament of Admission into the Visible Church, by Vertue of their Admission, you do entitle them to many choice Priviledges, and Special Advantages.

For, 1. Infants by being Members of the Visible Church, are interested in all the Prayers that are daily put up, in and for the Church: For though the Church by the common Tye of Humanity prays for all Mankind, yet those that are of her own Flock and Fold, have a special interest in her daily Supplications. Altho' there is not a Treasury of Merits, yet there is a Stock of Prayers continually going in and for the Church, in which the Infant Seed of Believers, as well as others, have a particular share: Now if you will fully neglect to admit them by Baptism into the Church, her Charity towards them, and Prayers for them, can extend no farther to them, than to Heathens and Infidels.

2. Infants by Virtue of their Admission into the Christian Church, have an Interest in that special providential care which Christ Exercises over his Church. Although Christ exercises a general care over the whole Creation; Yet he is in a more peculiar manner the Keeper of his *Israel*, his Eye is upon every Member of his

Church, Night and Day, and Infants no less than others, are under the Over-shadowing Wings of his Care.

3. Infants admitted by Baptism into the Visible Church, do stand nearer than the rest of Mankind to the promises of God: the Churches Children have a special promise of being taught of God, *Isa. 54. 13. All thy Children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy Children:* Whose Children are these? but the Children of the Gospel Church. Now the least Member of the Gospel Church is a more Special Object of those promises, than any Person that is without, can be supposed to be.

Infant Baptism then is Advantageous, as it is an Act of Initiation, or Admission into the Church.

2. As it is an Act of Dedication, it is farther Advantageous: The Parent in Baptism Consecrates his Child to the Service of its Rightful Lord and Master.

Infants it's certain may be now presented unto the Lord as well as the First-born were presented unto him of old; and if they may be, they must be, and the sooner the better. Your Children are God's already by Vertue of his choice, let them be also his, by Vertue of your Consecration.

Dedicate them to God in Baptism, and say; Lord, here is thy Child and mine; mine by Nature, thine by Covenant. I here present him to Thee, let him be accepted by Thee: Oh! Make him thine by Grace, and by Adoption, as well as by a Foederal Relation. Thou givest him the outward Sign, Oh! Do not deny him the inward Grace.

3. And farther, Baptism Administred in Infancy, is greatly Advantageous, as it is an Act of Restipulation; that is, the Child at Baptism, enters into Covenant with God, takes (as it were) Christ's Press-money in its hand, and its Name is entred into the Muster-Roll of the great Captain of our Salvation; the Child takes an Oath of Fidelity to him, and obliges it-self to fight Christ's Battels against Sin, the World and the Devil.

Now

Now I demand, can your Children begin too soon to enter their protestation against these Spiritual Enemies of their Salvation? can they too early engage themselves to God, by obliging themselves to become his Covenant Servants?

Obj. But say you, Infants are not capable of making this Engagement in their own Persons; how can they enter into Covenant with God, who know not that God is, or who he is?

Ans. This Objection lyes as strongly against Infant-Circumcision, as against Infant-Baptism, yet observe, that Almighty God was pleased to Seal the Covenant of Old to the Jewish Children, upon an Implicit and Imputative Stipulation; which at years of understanding, they were bound to own, by openly professing the Jewish Religion; an Implicit Stipulation was sufficient for the Children of Believers, Then, although an open profession and Stipulation was Required of grown Persons. In like manner, Baptism being Ordained for Persons of different Ages, for persons under, as well as at years of Discretion, personal and express Covenanting is required of the former: But as for Children, Baptism may be Administred to them, upon an Implicite and Vicarious Restipulation, by their Sponsors or Sureties, of whom *Tertullian* speaks, (*de Baptismo cap. 18.*) as a practice in use in the primitive Church, that the Sponsors did Stipulate in the name of the Minors, when they were Baptized: And I cannot understand what good Reason can be shewn, why Infants under the New Testament, should not Covenant with God, by an Implicit and Vicarious Stipulation, as well as the Jewish Infants did under the Old Testament.

Having thus shewn the Benefit and Advantage of Infant Baptism in general: I shall next prove to you, that it is much more useful and beneficial, to Baptize a Child in its Infancy, than to omit it till riper Years.

I. Because no Infant Member is capable of Hypocrisie, which persons grown up, are too much guilty of:

I do not say that Infants are a pure part of Mankind ; but I may say, they are the purest part thereof, wholly incapable of that gross Hypocrisie which is too often found amongst your Adult Profelytes, according to your own Confessions ; which tell us (in your Books) of Dross and Chaff, and Canaanites in your Congregations, (and we have great reason to believe, that therein you speak Truth.) Children (say you) fall away, and turn prophane, and practically deny there Baptism, therefore let them not be Baptized : and how many Apostates have you had amongst your selves (witness the great number of *Quakers*, which are fall'n from you, and deny all Water Baptism :) Therefore for shame make not this Objection, till you know God's Secrets, and Mens Hearts.

2. Baptism Administred in Infancy, is far more Advantageous, than at riper years, as it is a præ-engagement upon the Christian, to Repel and Resist the Temptations of Satan : What a forcible Argument has a young person from his early Dedication to God in Baptism, to resist the motions of Sin, and to repel the power of Temptations : And accordingly, *Luther* tells us of a young Virgin that resisted an Enticement to Uncleaness, with this Answer, *Baptizata Sum*, I am a Baptized person ; What shall I be reconciled to Sin, may the Soul say, unto which I was a Sworn Enemy from my Mothers Breast ? But now with what Armour shall the Unbaptized young person blunt the edge of Satan's Temptations ? Come along with me (says Satan) and Lift your self under my Banner, for you are under no Explicit Engagement to the contrary ; you cannot pretend that the Oath of God is upon you. 'Tis true, may the Devil say, you lye under a natural Obligation to serve and obey your Maker, as he is the Author of your being ; but you do not lye under that Super-added Obligation of a Baptismal Vow which others throw in my Teeth, when at any time I sollicit them to comply with my Desires. O then, let Parents early entitle God to their Children, that so they may prevent

vent the Devils claim, bring them under this Soul-engaging Ordinance of Baptism, and as soon as they are capable, cause them to understand the Obligation of that Engagement. As you love your Childrens Souls, let them not go grazing in the Wild Common of the World, without Christ's Sheep-mark upon them, lest Satan challenge them for his own, and clap his brand upon them.

3. Baptism in Infancy is more Advantageous, than at riper years, as it is an early Remedy against the Malady of Original Sin, that Hereditary Contagion of the Soul: Let me ask you, which is best for your Child that has the Kings-Evil from its Birth, to be touched for it in the Cradle, or to let the Distemper Reign upon the Child till it is grown up, and can be sensible of the Benefit. Original Sin, it is such an Evil, as none but the King of Heaven can Heal or Cure, and such is his Compassion and Condescension, that he not only permits, but invites you to bring your Children to him, that he may touch them, *St. Mark* 10. 13. Now what way is there but by Baptism, to bring your Infants under Christs healing Hand, they are capable of benefit by no other Ordinance but this: Therefore will it be not only unkindness, but cruelty, yea, a Degree of Soul Murther in you, to deny your Children the benefit of the Baptismal Laver.

4. Baptism early administred has this special Advantage, that it puts the Christian more bitterly upon mourning for actual Sin, from the Consideration of that shameful Perjury and wilful Apostacy that is found in such a Persons sin, who was by Baptism solemnly dedicated to God, and devoted to his Service and Glory. For thus may we suppose the early Baptized Christian to expostulate with himself, upon a due reflection on his personal miscarriages: Ah! Wretch that I am! did God enter me into his Family in my Infancy? did he ever since treat me as his Covenant Friend and Servant? and was I no sooner able to speak, but I blasphemed him; no sooner able to go, but I ran away from him? how have all the Blood and
Spirits

Spirits that ran thro' my youthful veins, boiled up against him ? Oh ! how have I contrary to the Duty of my natural and sworn Allegiance, entered into a Covenant with Satan, and into a Confederacy with my imperious Lusts ; Oh ! my Soul, remember from whence thou art fall'n, and repent, renew thy Covenant with God, lest by more rivetted Apostacies thou provokest him to make thee a tremendous example to all revolting Backsliders.

But now an unbaptized Person has no such Consideration, from which to aggravate the Sins of his Youth ; he never having engaged himself to God, nor any for him, by a Sacramental tye ; and consequently looks upon himself as free, and discharged from any such engagement and obligation.

5. Baptism administered in Infancy has this singular Advantage, above that which is administered at riper years ; that it gives the pious Parent a good ground of hope, that his Children dying in their Infancy are certainly saved ; for his Child being within the Covenant, and having the Seal of the Covenant (Baptism) Applied to it, God makes that Ordinance at once a channel of Grace to the Child, and a Conduit of Comfort to the Parent ; and accordingly Christian Parents may comfort themselves with the hopes of their Childrens Salvation, as *David* comforted himself at the death of his Child, *1 Sam. 12. 23. I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*

Obj. But, say you, *David* means the Grave, the place of the Dead ; and not the Kingdom of Heaven.

Ans. Doth he so ? how comes he then to comfort himself with that Consideration ? Surely it had been cold comfort to *David*, to think that he should one day lye by his Child in the grave. Doubtless he hoped to meet his young Child in Heaven, and that expectation was the ground of his support ; and his Childs being in Covenant with God was the ground of that expectation. Now I appeal to you whether the well-grounded hope that a Parent has of his Childs happiness, dying under the Seal of the Covenant be

be not a mighty support to his sorrowful Spirit, which the careless neglecters and wilful contemners of the Ordinance of God cannot have; all the support such can have is from the absolute Mercy and Sovereign Pleasure of Almighty God; such a ground of Comfort, as a *Turk*, or an *Infidel* that knows not any thing of God, may have to support them in the like Condition.

6. The Practice of Baptizing in Infancy appears to be most beneficial and advantageous; because it prevents such shameful and scandalous neglects of Baptism, and delays in the administration, as would most certainly arise in the Church, to the great blemish of Christianity. Verily were persons wholly left to themselves when they would come to that Ordinance, there being such an averfeness in mans Nature to so strict and spiritual an Engagement; we should certainly meet with as much difficulty to bring persons to Baptism, as we do to persuade them to come to the Lord's Supper. They would need the same pressing importunity to prevail with them to be Baptized, were it not done in their Minority; which now we are forced to use with them to persuade them to be communicated.

Oh how many sorry shifts, frivolous excuses, and pitiful pretences should we have from them for delaying their Baptism? Some out of an unwillingness to forsake the pleasures of Sin, others plead want of sufficient Knowledge, others multitude of business, and many would stick at their own unworthiness: Therefore supposing the bare lawfulness of Infant Baptism, the Wisdom of the Church in all Ages is greatly to be approved, which has appointed the early Administration of Baptism, to prevent the scandalous neglect of such a sacred Institution of our Saviour. Baptism in Infancy having been proved not only lawful, but more advantageous and useful than when administered at riper years, and being a Sacrament of Admission into the visible Church: it necessarily follows that it ought but once to be administered

to any Person: and therefore when Persons have been rightly Baptized in Infancy, to Re-baptize, or Baptize them over again at riper years, (as the *Anabaptists* do) is sinful in them that undertake it, and no less sinful in any of you that submit unto it.

Here therefore I shall undertake these two Points.

1. I will endeavour to satisfy you, that such of you as were baptiz'd in Infancy, were *lawfully* and *rightly* baptiz'd.

2. That you having been once duly and rightly Baptized, ought not to be Baptized over again; and cannot submit unto such a needless Repetition of the Ordinance without Sin.

1. I affirm, that those of you who were Baptized in our Communion during your Infancy, were lawfully and rightly Baptized. This appears by an Enumeration of the several requisites, necessary to denominate a Person lawfully Baptized: all which did concur and were found in your Baptism. (1.) The Person Baptizing ought to be a lawful Minister, Authorized and Commissioned by Christ, and the Governours of his Church, for the right administration of the Word and Sacraments. (2.) The party Baptized must be a Subject qualified for Baptism; which the foregoing discourse has proved Infants to be. (3.) The Element made use of must be Water; the Application of which to the Body being a lively resemblance of the Application of Christs Blood to the Soul, for the washing away both the guilt and filth of Sin. (4.) It ought to be done before credible Witnesses that they may attest the Child's Admission into the Christian Church, as amongst the Jews certain Registers or written Genealogies were found in which the names of the circumcised Persons were recorded. See *Ezra* 2.62. *Neb.* 64. and accordingly the practice of the Christian Church has been in all Ages to Baptize in the face of the Congregation, publicly owning thereby the party Baptized for a Member of the Visible Church of Christ.

Lastly, Baptism ought to be administred in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by an humble Invocation upon God in Prayer for a Blessing

sing upon the Ordinance; and with suitable Exhortation and Advice to those that present the Child to Baptism to take care that it be brought up in the Christian Faith, which it is Baptiz'd into.

Now if Baptism thus administred be lawful and regular, I may according to the Judgment of Charity pronounce you that are here present rightly Baptized, all the essential requisites being found in your Baptism. Therefore my next undertaking shall be to convince you, that to renounce your first Dedication to God, to disown your former Baptism, and to submit your selves to the Re-baptisers Dipping, is a very hainous and scandalous Sin.

And that I may fully convince you of the greatness of this Abomination; I shall offer a six-fold Argument to your Consideration.

1. *Arg.* If Baptism succeeds in the room of Circumcision; then Baptism is, as Circumcision was, but once to be administred.

But that Baptism succeeds in the room of Circumcision, I hope my first Argument for the lawfulness of Infant Baptism has fully satisfied you; therefore as Circumcision was but once Administred, no more ought Baptism.

The reason for both is the same, because as Circumcision was the Sacrament of Initiation, and the door of Admission into the Vible Church, so is Baptism; when Persons are admitted members of a Society, they enter their Names but once for all.

Obj. I know some of you object, That the Lord commanded *Joshua* ch. 5. v. 2. *To circumcise the Children of Israel the second time.*

Ans. But you do not consider that they were not the same Persons; but the Children of those Persons that were circumcised: for the Case was this; Circumcision being omitted for forty years in the Wilderness, when the *Israelites* came to *Canaan*, the Lord requires *Joshua* to revive that Ordinance; not to repeat it upon the Parents, but to revive it upon their Children; See *ch.* 5. 7. And
their

their Children Joshua circumcised, because they had not been circumcised by the way. As Circumcision therefore was not to be Reiterated then, no more ought Baptism to be Repeated now.

2. *Arg.* That Practice, which is inconsistent with the Nature and End of Baptism, is certainly sinful. But to Baptize over again those who were once rightly Baptized, is inconsistent with the Nature and End of Baptism. Therefore is the Practice sinful. What is Baptism, but the Sacrament of our New birth? Now as we can be born but once in the Flesh, so but once in the Spirit. 'Tis the Sacrament of our Infiton or Implantation into Christ. *Regeneratio spiritualis una est*, says, St. Austin, *Sicut generatio carnalis est una*. But why may not Baptism be Repeated as well as the Lord's Supper? Because that is a Sacrament for our spiritual growth, this for our spiritual-birth; a Person is born but once, but fed often. *Semel nascimur, sæpius pascimur*. Besides, every time we come to the Lord's Supper, altho' we do not make a new Covenant with God, yet we renew our old One, which is much better.

3. *Arg.* That use of a Sacrament, for which there is no command nor example in the Holy Scriptures, neither expressly, nor by just and necessary consequence, is sinful. But for Re-baptizing such as were once rightly Baptized, we have neither Scripture-precept, nor Scripture-president, directly or consequently. Therefore the Practice of baptizing over gain such as have been formerly Baptized, is certainly sinful. Indeed in the Institution of the Lord's Supper, we find (*à Quotiescunque*) as oft as ye do this, mentioned, which implies a command to do it often; but no such Word of command relating to Baptism, to do that oftner than once; and accordingly amongst the many thousands that we read of who were Baptized in the Apostles days, we find not any that were Baptized twice over. Altho' some of them had Apostatiz'd from the Faith they were Baptiz'd into, yet upon their

their Repentance they were received into the Churches Communion without being Re-Baptized.

4. *Arg.* That which is a perverting of the Ordinance of God, and a prophane taking of his Holy Name in vain must needs be sinful. But thus causlessly to reiterate Baptism, and Baptize over again those who were once rightly Baptized, is a Prophanation of the Ordinance, and a taking of Gods Name in vain, therefore sinful. Sacraments are the sacred institutions of our Blessed Saviour, and the most venerable Mysteries of our Religion, and ought to be treated by all Persons, with the greatest solemnity and respect; now to repeat them without just cause, and a fit occasion is to trifle with them; and to take the tremendous Name of God in vain in the use of them.

5. *Arg.* Sacrilegiously to renounce our first Dedication to God, and to give Satan the highest advantage against us, that he can desire, must certainly be sinful in the highest degree.

But for a Person to disown his Baptism, is sacrilegiously to renounce his first Dedication to God, to renounce his former Relation to Christ, and does give Satan an unspeakable advantage against a person. Therefore in the highest degree sinful. Our Dedication to God in Baptism, is a Dedication for ever; so that to renounce that, is to renounce our Relation to God's Family; to renounce our standing in Christ's Kingdom, to cut off our selves from that Body of which Christ is the Head, and in effect to renounce Christianity it self.

And as to that Power and Advantage, which it gives the Devil over a Person, I need say but this: That several of those vile People called Witches, who have made a formal Covenant and expresse contract with the Devil, have declared; that the first thing which Satan has required of them, was to renounce their Baptism, before which he could get no Power over them; and after which they had no power to resist or withstand him.

6. *Arg.* If the Church has held it sinful to Baptize such Persons over again, who had the essentials of Baptism, tho' Baptized by Hereticks: Then is it much more sinful to Re-baptize such as are rightly Baptized by lawful Ministers. But the Church has all along refused to Baptize them over again, who were at first Baptiz'd by Hereticks; if the Ordinance for the substance of it were rightly Administred to them. Therefore much less ought Persons, who are already rightly Baptized by the true Ministers of Christ, to submit to be Baptized over again, nor can they submit unto it without Sin.

It was a concluded Case in the Primitive Church, that where Baptism is rightly administred by a due Application of the Word and Water, tho' by an Heretick, yet it is certainly valid and good; and accordingly the Church appointed that such Baptized Persons should be Catechised and Instructed in the Faith they were Baptized into; and so by Prayers and Imposition of Hands were received into Communion with the Church; but were never Re-baptized. Nay further, this was not only the opinion and practice of the Primitive Church of old, but it is also the judgment and practice of the reformed Churches at this day: For if a Person be Baptized by a Romish Priest, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and with the Element of Water, if afterwards this Person comes into the Protestant Communion, the Reformed Churches will not Baptize him over again: but exhort him and oblige him to make a right use of that Baptism which was (for Substance) rightly Administred to him: tho' in an undue manner.

What a high degree of Censoriousness and uncharitableness then is it, in you of the *Anabaptists* perswasion, to condemn the Baptism of all the Reformed Churches throughout the World as Null and Void, to pronounce it not an Irregularity only, but a Nullity also: Affirming boldly as you have now done at this present Conference, that there is no true Baptism, no true Church but amongst
your

your selves : which was exactly the Opinion of the *Donatists* in the days of *St. Austin* : who affirmed then, as you do now, that Almighty God had no Church, no Ordinances, no People but amongst them, who were a poor handful of deluded Mortals, in a corner of *Africa*.

Therefore for a close of this Argument concerning the sinfulness of Re-baptizing ; Allow me I pray you, liberty in the Name of my great Master, and for the Honour of his Holy Institutions, which have been so shamefully prostituted by some of you lately in our Neighbourhood, to expostulate the case with such of you as have submitted to be Baptized over again. Sirs, I beseech you seriously to consider both the Sin committed against God, and the scandal given to good Men ; by renouncing your former Baptism, you have renounced your first Dedication to God, your former Relation to Christ : you have disown'd that ever you were Members of his Body : You have profaned a Solemn Ordinance of God, and taken his Holy Name in vain, you have Condemned all the Reformed Churches throughout the World, who decry this practice of yours as an Abomination : Consider I beseech you how you have fallen, and repent.

Also for the publick scandal you have lately given to all sober Christians, you ought to be greatly humbled : partly from the place it self in which you have been Re-baptized, a filthy Pond in which Horses tumble, and Swine wallow, partly from the consideration of that Scorn and Contempt which was cast upon a pretended Ordinance of God by the promiscuous Multitude, who beheld this Action of yours with disdain and derision. God grant your repentance may be as publick as your offence, and the scandal given by your offence. And for such of you whom God has yet kept from this sinful practice, my advice is, as you love your Souls, and value your inward peace, avoid the snare, shun all occasions, come not near the Tents of these Men. Know that you are already in the Communion of a Church, which

when⁴⁸ you

The Sinfulness of Re-Baptizing.

leave us, the farther you go, the worse you'll speed.

I know what your Dipper here will reply to all this, that he is against Re-baptizing also, and therefore to perswade you to come under his hands, he will tell you, that he calls you to Baptism, not to be Re baptized, you being (as he insinuates) never Baptized at all, because you were Rantiz'd, not Baptiz'd, Sprinkled, not Dipped, or Plunged all over in the Water; which, says he, is so necessary in the Act of Baptizing, that a Person may as well omit to baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and Holy Ghost, as omit the Dipping the Party baptiz'd under the Water, which is the next part of the Controversie between us and you. For the clearer understanding of which I shall do three things.

1. Lay down some general Propositions relating to this Controversie.

2. Produce our Arguments which fully satisfy us, touching the Lawfulness of our way of Baptizing without Dipping.

3. Return an answer to what you offer in plea for the justifying your own Practice and condemning ours.

1. General Propositions for the clearing of this Controversie.

1. Prop. That we ought to distinguish betwixt that which is of the Essence of Baptism, and that which only is accidental in Baptism: The Word and the Element of Water are of the Essence of Baptism: *Accedat verbum ad Elementum, & fit Sacramentum*: says St. Austin: let the word of Institution be added to the Water, and it becomes a Sacrament: but tho' Water be essential in Baptism, yet the *modus applicandi*; that is, the manner of applying the Water to the person baptized, is only Circumstantial: Some apply the Person to the Water, others apply the Water to the Person; both are Warrantable, because we have sufficient reason to believe that Baptism was Administred both ways by the first Administrators of it, as shall be made appear in its place.

2. Prop.

2. *Prop.* That the way and manner of applying the Water in baptism is not positively determined in the Holy Scriptures, it cannot be gathered either from the signification of the word, or from the significancy of the Ceremony, or from the Command of Christ. Not from the signification of the Original word, for that signifies to Wash as well as to Dip. Not from the significancy of the Ceremony, For the pouring out of Water on the Person baptized, is as significative as the pouring out of the Blood of Christ, and the pouring forth the Spirit of Christ upon the Christians, (which is the thing signified in baptism) as dipping can be: and farther we meet with no command from Christ to evince the necessity either of dipping or Sprinkling; we are required to baptize with Water, in the name of the Father, &c. But we find no Command either for the measure and quantity of the Water, or for the manner of applying the Water in Baptism, any more than we find for the quantity of bread, or the quality of Wine in the Lords Supper.

3. *Prop.* That as there is a probability that baptism was Administred in the Apostles times by immersion or Dipping, so there is likewise a probability that it was Administred by aspersion or Sprinkling, if such as were Baptized in *Jordan* and *Enon* were Baptized by Dipping, yet such as were Baptized in their own Houses, as *St Paul*, *Act.* 9. 18, 19. And the *Jaylor* at midnight, and those 3000 that were Baptized, *Act.* 2. On the Feast of *Pentecost*, before the Congregation then Assembled at *Jerusalem*: Surely it is much more probable that these were baptized by Sprinkling or pouring Water on the face, that representing the whole Person: for the Dipping so many thousands over Head and Ears in a River would have been a work of many days, which the Text tells us was done the same day, *Act.* 2. 41. So that the manner of applying the Water being not positively determined in Scripture, it seems probable enough, that Baptism was and may be administred either way, both by Dipping and Sprinkling.

4. *Prop.* That we do not oppose the Lawfulness of Dipping in some case, but the necessity of Dipping in all cases. Our Church acknowledges the Lawfulness of Dipping, and in some cases directs us to it, but she does not account it so essential to Baptism as to enjoin it in all cases, without any respect had to times and persons. For the change of such a circumstance being undetermined in the Word of God, is no change or Violation of the Original Institution.

5. *Prop.* That none ought to put a Divine Institution upon any Rite, at their own pleasure, when it is in its own nature indifferent : and consequently those who lay such a mighty stress upon Dipping, as to pronounce the Baptism of all the Reformed Churches throughout the World Null and Void without it, ought to prove it an unchangeable Rite intended by Christ to oblige and bind all Nations, all Persons, and at all Times, and of such indispensable necessity that the Voluntary Omission of it is a Sin : Now that Man must have a large share of confidence that will assert this concerning Dipping.

6. *Prop.* That in Sacraments it is not the quantity of Elements but the significancy of them, that ought to be attended : In Circumcision it was not the quantity of Flesh cut off, so much as the signification of it, that the Jews were to concern themselves about : So in the Lords Supper it is not the quantity of Bread and Wine, but the right apprehension of the thing signified, thereby that we should labour after. Sure I am, that the Tasting and Eating of a little Bread, and Drinking a small quantity of Wine does signifie to me my full Communion with Christ as well as the largest Banquet could do. Thus also in Baptism a few drops of Water pour'd upon me, may signify, Seal, convey and confirm to me a right and interest in all the benefits of my Saviours Death and Resurrection, as fully as if with *Jonah*, I were plunged into the Main Ocean.

These General propositions being laid down for the clearer

clearer understanding of this Water-controversie, I proceed to produce those arguments, which satisfy us touching the Lawfulness of our Administring Baptism without Dipping.

1. *Arg.* Such an application of Water in the Administration of Baptism, as the Spirit of God in Scripture expressly calls Baptizing, is Lawful and sufficient to be used in Baptism.

But sprinkling or pouring Water upon the party Baptized, without Dipping, is by the Spirit of God in divers Scriptures, expressly called a Baptizing.

Therefore it is Lawful and sufficient, and Dipping not necessary. I should not trouble this Auditory with the signification of the Original word, which we render to Baptize; Did not the *Anabaptists* confidently assert that it always signifies to Dip or Plunge a Person or thing wholly under Water, or at least that Dipping or Plunging is the Primary signification of the Word, which is a great mistake: For the Primitive word βαπτω, (from whence comes βαπτίζω) signifies to Die, or give a new Colour, a Metaphor taken from a Dyers Vat. And altho' I am not fond of Notions gather'd from Metaphorical expressions, I will adventure to say for once, that the Metaphor may serve not unfitly to remind us of our privilege in Baptism, whereby our Souls are made receptive of a new Colour, by being imbued with the Tincture of that Faith which we are Baptized into. And as for the derivative word βαπτίζω. Sometimes it signifies to Dip or Plunge, sometimes to Wash or Cleanse: Thus, *Heb. 9.v. 10.* we read of divers Washings under the Law. In the original, it is divers baptisms. Now ~~what~~ *what* were those Washings but Sprinkling? Sometimes Blood was sprinkled, sometimes Water was poured forth. No persons were Dipped or Plunged in Blood, yet those Sprinklings are called Baptizings. Thus also in *St. Mark 7.v 4.* *The Pharisees Eat not except they Wash.* In the Original it is, *Except they be Baptized.* Now the manner of

Washing before Meat is sufficiently known, not to be by Dipping, but by pouring Water; see *2 Kings 3. v. 11. Elisha poured water on the Hands of Elisha*: We read also of their Baptisms (or) Washings of Beds and Tables many times a day, which if done by Dipping, besides many other inconveniencies, would make the labour of the *Jews* intolerable, and the burthen insupportable. If then the word (Baptize) be a word of Latitude and large signification: If it signifies as well to Sprinkle and Wash, as to Plunge and Dip, then for you to build an Article of Faith upon the signification of that word, and to condemn our Baptism as Null and Void, when the subject Baptized is Washed, tho' not Dip'd and Plung'd, is unreasonably weak, and to all Wise Men utterly unconvincing.

2. *Arg.* Against Dipping. If Baptism administred by pouring Water on the Face, (representing the whole person) doth answer the Use and End of Baptism, as well as when administred by Dipping and Plunging. Then Dipping is not essentially and absolutely necessary in the Act of Baptizing. But the one answers the Use and End of Baptism as well as the other. Therefore the one cannot be more necessary than the other. What is the Use and End of Baptism but to represent to our minds the effusion of Christ's Blood for the taking away the Guilt of Sin, and the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit, for the purging away the Filth of it? Now the Sprinkling of the Blood of Christ, and the pouring forth of his Holy Spirit upon the Infant, are more fully and plainly represented by Baptism, as administration by Sprinkling than by Dipping. For thus I Argue:

If the Inward and Spiritual Grace signified by Baptism, be more lively represented by Sprinkling, than by Dipping: Then surely Sprinkling is not only as Lawful, but more expedient than Dipping.

But the Inward and Spiritual Grace signified by Baptism, to wit, the cleansing of the Soul by the Grace and Spirit

Spirit of Christ, is more lively represented by Sprinkling than by Dipping. Therefore more expedient, and accordingly we find Almighty God himself, often expressing that mercy of Sanctification by this action, *Ezek. 36. 25. Then will I Sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean, &c.*

3. Arg. If dipping were essentially and absolutely necessary in Baptism, then in all the Baptisms recorded in Scripture, we should meet with full proof, or at least with fair probability, that the parties baptized were all dipped. But in several instances of Baptized persons Recorded in Scripture, we meet with no such Proof, nor yet with any Probability of their being dipped, when they were baptized, but the contrary. Therefore surely, dipping cannot be so essential to baptism, as for want of it, to pronounce the Baptism of all the Reformed Churches throughout the World to be Null and Void.

Observe a few instances in the New Testament.

1. Take notice of St. Pauls baptism by *Ananias, Acts 9. v. 18, 19. He arose and was Baptized; and when he had received Meat, he was strengthened:* Read the Context, and you will be convinced that he was Baptized in his Lodgings, being Sick and Weak, having Fasted three whole Days; now being in this low condition, partly by his Miraculous Vision, and partly by his extraordinary fasting, I appeal to you, whether it be probable to conceive that *Ananias* carried him out to a River in that condition to plunge him in cold Water.

2. Observe the instance of the Jaylor, *Acts 16. 33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was Baptized, he and all his straight way.* That St. Paul, who was newly washed of his Sores occasioned by his Stripes, should carry the Jaylor and all his in the Dead of the Night, out to a River or Pond to Baptize them, is only to be believed, by such as have their credulity at their own dispose, and can believe what they list.

3. We

3. We read, *Acts* 2. 41. of three thousand Baptized in one day, in the same place where they heard St. Peters Sermon which Converted them: This place the Text tells us was *Jerusalem*, and must be either the Temple, or some House, or in a Street, where such quantities of Water could not be found, as might serve for the decent Dipping of so many thousands in so short a time, and besides, that Baptizing so many by Dipping, would have required a Week rather than a Day to dispatch it in.

4. *Arg.* Against the necessity of Dipping, is thus: If Baptism be an Institution prescribed to all Nations, then its manner of Administration being common to all, must be possible to all, but Baptism cannot be Administred in some Countries by Dipping. 1. In regard of the difficulty of the thing: Some Countrys scarce having Water enough to drink, not a River, nor a Brook in many miles compass. 2. In regard of the danger of the thing: For doubtless our Saviour, who prefers mercy before Sacrifice, allows the Administration of the Ordinance in such a way as is consistent with his Peoples lives, which must in some Countries especially at some seasons of the year, be in extream danger by dipping: None at all (says you in your Letter to me) for the presence of God can make the cold water hot: Who questions his power, say I, but where is his promise? Why, say you, in *Isa.* 43. 2. *When thou passest thorow the Waters, I will be with thee.* (Good God, was there ever such an ignorant wresting the Scriptures, since they were first Written, as at this day is made by these Lay-Preachers:) But whether you will believe or not, that Dipping in the Northern Countries will endanger Life, I am better satisfied, than if I experienced it, by reading an Act made by the Senate at *Zurich* in *Zwitzerland*, that if an *Anabaptist* Dip any of their People, he should be punish'd with Drowning.

5. *Arg.* Whatsoever has a tendency towards the breach

breach of the sixth and seventh Commandment by endangering our Own or our Neighbours Life, Health or Chastity, is not safe, but sinful.

But Baptism by dipping as Administred by some Persons, and in some places may expose all these to hazard: Therefore it is not safe, but sinful. How many thousand persons Strong and Weak, Old and Young, would this plunging over Head and Ears in Northern Countries, and in the Winter season infallibly destroy and make an end of?

Whereas Almighty God is very tender over the Life of Man, he would not have the *Jewish* Infants Circumcised before the eighth day, lest they had not sufficient strength to bear it: and surely he is not less merciful to the seed of his people now, than he was under the Law. What a burthen was Circumcision accounted before it was removed? But verily you go about to substitute as heavy a burthen in the room of it, nay heavier, for Circumcision put one part of the Body to pain, but your Dipping affects the whole body. Now therefore, why tempt you God, by putting a Yoke of servitude upon the neck of Christ's Free-Men, which neither they nor their Children are able to bear.

Farther, this practice of yours endangers your own, and your Neighbours Chastity. For either you dip the person naked, or cloathed; if cloathed, by what authority do you baptize the cloaths, together with the person? If naked, or next to naked, what unclean thoughts and filthy desires may this Occasion, if not in the Actors, yet at least in the gazing Spectators? Whereas all the Ordinances of God ought to be performed with that gravity and modesty, with that shame-facedness and Sobriety, as may extort a Veneration from all beholders, and not prostitute them to contempt and scorn.

Obj. But, say you in your Letter to me, what Immodesty was in *Lydia* and other women in Scripture, who, as we believe, were baptized by dipping?

Answer.

Ans. Prove it positively that they were dipt if you can, and then I will Answer you, that that may be Lawful and modest in one Country, which is sinful and immodest in another. In some Hot Countries it is no immodesty to go Naked, but he that shall do so in *England*, will be accounted an immodest beast. In *Boaz*, his Country, it was no immodesty in *Ruth* to come behind him, uncover his Feet, and lye down by him; but should a young Maid serve you so, if you are a modest Man, you would certainly account her a Whore for so doing.

6. *Arg.* That Ordinance, and that way of Administration which Almighty God has honoured and blest to the benefit and advantage of many thousands of his Children and People, ought not to be accounted either sinfully Administred, or invalid in the Administration.

But the Administration of baptism without dipping, has Almighty God highly honoured, and signally blest, to the comfort and advantage of multitudes of his Servants, many of whom are yet alive, and many more rejoyce in Heaven, for the benefit and comfort of their Baptism, tho' never Dipt: Therefore what presumptive rashness is it in you, to pronounce the Ordinance of baptism thus Administred and thus blest, to be Null and Void?

Having thus produced the Arguments for the Lawfulness of our way of Administring Baptism: I come next to consider your way of Administration, and to examine, whether your Arguments for Dipping will hold Water.

Your common Pleas are,

1. Plea, the word (*Baptize*) in Scripture, say you, always signifies to Dip, when applied to the Ordinance of Baptism.

Not always (say we) but oft-times signifies Washing and Sprinkling, as was largely shewn even now, and plainly appears from *1 Cor. 10. 1.* *They were all Baptized in the Cloud.* This could be no other than by Sprinkling, for they could not be Dip in the Cloud.

Obj.

Obj. Oh! but say you, this was no real Baptism, but Typical only and extraordinary.

Ans. It was real Baptism, for *Moses* Baptism and *Christ's* differ'd not in substance, the *Israelites* Baptism was a *Prodomus* and fore-runner of our Baptism, but be it as it will: this instance shews and confutes you that the word Baptize doth not always signifie to Dip.

Obj. But say you, the *Dutch Annotators* thus render the word (Baptize) to Doop or Dip, and for *John the Baptist* they read *John the Dooper*. Therefore, &c.

Ans. Very well: and suppose our *English Annotators* had rendred it *John the Sprinkler*, as the *Dutch* have rendred it *John the Dipper*, had not the Argument been the same? What a mighty impertinency is this to lay so much stress upon the signification of a Word which is taken in several senses, as the great Masters of the Greek-Tongue have abundantly proved?

2. Plea. But Baptism, say you, signifies the Death and Burial of Christ; now *Dipping* is a more lively representation of Christ's Death, for thereby the party Baptized is received into the Bosom of the Water, as our Saviour was into the Bosom of the Earth.

Ans. Baptism may signifie the Death of Christ, and be so administred as lively to represent the Death of our Saviour, without exposing those who are Baptized to the danger of Death, and may signifie Christ's burial too; without sending the Baptized person to his Grave. Even in Sprinkling, there is a plain Representation of Christ's death, for the pouring forth of the Water not unfitly represents the pouring forth the Earth upon a dead Body; but if you will closely follow the Metaphor of burial in all particulars: Then as the person buried is altogether passive, and laid in the Grave only by others; in like manner, the party Baptized ought to put neither Foot, nor Leg, nor Thigh into the Water himself, but the Dipper ought to take him up in his Arms, and lay his intire Body into the Water, as a Man is laid into his Grave; the

the persons whom you pretend to Baptize, go into the water near the Waste; now so far as they go in of themselves, they baptize themselves; why do you not keep close to the Metaphor of burying, and lay them down intirely into the bosom of the water. I confess I have heard of some of you, that have kept closer to this Metaphor of Burial; and have kept the Baptized persons so long under water, that they have been almost choaked and buried alive; so that by this you see, what little reason you have to make such an outcry against us, for baptizing only a part of the Body instead of the whole; it is very plain you do the same your selves, you baptize only from the waste upward, all the lower part is put under water by themselves, not by you: *Thou that judgest another condemnest thy self*, inasmuch as thou dost the same thing.

3. Plea. Our blessed Saviour, say you, was Baptized at thirty years of Age, and then by Dipping: *For he went up out of the Water*, St. Mat. 3. 16. and shall not we imitate our dear Saviours Example?

Ans. Yes, in all things wherein he has commanded you to follow it. Remember that Christ was circumcised at eight days old in his Infancy, and altho he was not Baptized in his Infancy, yet was he Baptized in the Infancy of Baptism: Our Saviour being very early Baptized of St. *John*, after he entred upon that Office; as for the manner of our Saviours Baptism we have no certainty, for his going up out of the water is expounded by some, of the Scituation of the River *Jordan*, which was beneath the place where St. *John* was teaching; but suppose that our Saviour did go down into the water, and was Baptized by Immersion, where has he commanded you to go into Water, because he did; an Example without a Precept, especially in an extraordinary Person, and in extraordinary Case, as our Saviours was, is not binding.

4. Plea. But *John* Baptized in *Enon*, because there

was much water there, and Philip went down with the Eunuch into the water, therefore dipping was the way then.

1. *Ans.* As for St. Johns baptizing in *Enon*, Job. 3. 23. Let the Original be considered: and it is not, *there was πολύ ὕδωρ, much Water, but πολλά ὕδατα, many waters*: that is, many Streams or Rivulets of water there, and *Sandy's Travails* tell us, that they were so shallow as not to reach above the Ankles; so that the small quantity of water would hardly admit of baptism by dipping.

2. But suppose they did baptize by dipping then, when there was neither danger nor indecency; yet it doth not follow that all Nations must do the same, and that at all times; unless (1.) Practice and Example be a sufficient ground for the Institution of a Sacramental Rite. (2.) Unless it can be proved that every circumstance belonging to a Sacrament is of an unchangeable and unalterable Nature, and so necessary that it may not in any Case be altered without sin. Both which will appear *ad Græcas calendat*. Having now dispatcht the Controversial: I come in the last place to the Practical part of this Discourse.

1. All you that are pious Parents, Bless God for this Birth-priviledge; and be not wrangled out of it, own it as an invaluable favour that Almighty God has taken your Children into Covenant with Himself, together with your selves; when you dedicate your Children to God in baptism, God Seals unto them presently, their Names are put into the Deed; and during their Infancy Christ the Mediator of the Covenant is surety for them: If when they grow up, they dislike their Master and turn Renegado's, it is neither Gods fault, nor thine, if they be cast out of Covenant, nay cast into Hell; what low and contemptible thoughts soever some men have of this Birth-priviledge, I dare appeal to the tender Bowels of any Christian Parent, whether he would not sooner part with his Children into Captivity,

vity, and chose rather to see them Galley-slaves in *Turkey*, and at the same time in Covenant with God; than to enjoy them in his Arms, and not have them Members of Christ's Body. Yea I will add, that it would be a much less Sorrow to a pious Parent, to see his Children dashed against the Stones, and yet to die under Christ's Wing, as Visible Members of his Body; then to have them live all their days in his sight, having no other than a visible standing in the Devils Kingdom.

It is not meet says our Saviour, to take Childrens Bread, and cast it unto Dogs: Baptism is the Bread of the Lord, which he would have given to his Children: God Almighty then forgive those Men, who make the Infant Seed of Believers no better than Dogs; and pronounce them as incapable of benefit by Baptism as unreasonable Creatures, and declare it to be as lawful to Christen a Bell; as to Baptize a Child; that when it rains, if a Parent bring his Child into the open Air, and let the Cloud sprinkle it; it is as effectual as if the Priest Baptiz'd it. Verily the day is hastning, when a severe account must be given by these Men, for all the hard speeches they have uttered against the Innocent Lambs in Christ's Flock, for which the great Shepherd died. As for you that hear me this day, if you love your selves and your Children in your selves, stand up in the defence of your Childrens *Magna Charta*, in opposition to all those that will bring their *Quo Warranto* against it; and verily when I consider what an invaluable Priviledge the Covenant-Blessing is, I cannot but wonder that any pious Parent who is withal Judicious; should suffer himself to be Bubbl'd out of it. But especially I admire, how it comes to pass that you that are Mothers, who have naturally such a strong Affection to your Innocent Babes, should yet be in Love with this sower Opinion, which not only sets your Children in their Infancy, in no better State than Pagans and Infidels, but ranks them amongst Dogs and Swine, as to
their

their incapacity of receiving any benefit by baptism: But I easily answer my self thus, that Women thro' the weakness of their understandings, do not apprehend the Consequences of this Opinion; and so they maintain the hopes of their Childrens Salvation, whilst they destroy the grounds of it; which is indeed right Womens Logick, to hold the Conclusion, and yet deny the premises; that is, to believe that their Children are saved, and yet deny that they are in Covenant with God, which is the great ground of hope for their Salvation.

2. Let me exhort all you that are Parents, or may be such, to take special care that you conscientiously discharge your duty to your Children, as you will answer the contrary at the barr of God; and that you may do so, know

1. Something is to be done for them before they are born.

2. Something as soon as they are born.

3. Something as soon as they come to years of understanding.

1. Before your Children are born (1.) Make sure as much as in you lieth, that they may be born within the Covenant, and under the Promise, by your being in Covenant with God your selves; see that the Lord be your God, a God in Covenant with you; and then you may comfortably hope that he will be the God of your seed, in their Generations; Oh were but Infants capable of Knowledge, how much would they dread being born of wicked Parents, that live in open Rebellion against God, it matters not what Planet, but what Promise your Children are born under; if they be born under the Promise, you may look upon them as a hopeful seed. Farther (2.) Make it your endeavour before your Children are born, to sanctifie your Children: This is done by Prayer and Thanksgiving, Children are not only capable of a blessing as soon as they are born, but they ought to be blessed by their Parents before they are born. 1. By Blessing God for the hopes of them;

and 2d. By commending them by Prayer unto his blessing.

2. As soon your Children are born, present them to the Lord, Dedicate and devote them to the service of their Maker in the Ordinance of baptism; and do this presently, joyfully, and publickly: (1.) Dedicate your Children to God in Baptism speedily; do not unnecessarily delay it; for thereby you will implicitly deny God the Title, which by Vertue of the Covenant he has to your seed, as soon as ever they are yours; nay farther, upon such delay you have great reason to fear, lest God should be angry with you, as he was with *Moses* for delaying to Circumcise his Child; and lest you should be in as much danger, as he was also: *When the Angel of the Lord met him in the way, and sought to kill him, Exod. 4. 24.* Again, (2.) Dedicate your Children to God joyfully, looking upon the day of their baptism as the day of their espousal to Christ, as the day of their Admission into his Family, and consequently a day of greater Joy than their Marriage-day to the Mightiest Monarchs upon Earth; and with much greater Thankfulness to be celebrated. (3.) Make use of a publick opportunity to do this in; do not huddle up your Childrens baptism in private, but give them up to God in the Face of the Congregation, partly, that by the Prayers of many, the incomes of the Ordinance may be the more Plentiful; and partly, that the Ratification of the engagement may be the more solemn.

In a Word, shall the opposers of Infant baptism, creep out of darkness and private Corners, and in the Face of the Country, scandalously dip their deluded Proselytes at Noon-day; and shall we, who do that which is a joyful Spectacle to Holy Angels and good Men, decline the Light, as if it were a deed of darkness; God forbid? Let us not seek Corners to baptize our Infants in, whilst we need not, lest God justly permit the Enemies of the Truth to prevail so far, as to force us into Corners when we would not.

3. As soon as your Children are capable of Understanding:

standing: Endeavour to make them sensible of their baptismal Dedication and Engagements, and that they begin early to walk suitably thereunto. What's the reason so little fruit appears of this Advantageous and Soul engaging Ordinance of baptism in the lives of Children? is it not too often from the Parents neglect? We read, that when Almighty God was offended with *Moses* for neglecting to Circumcise his Child; his Wife *Zipporah* in a Passion threw the Childs Fore skin at him, saying, *A Bloody Husband hast thou been unto me: Oh! How many Children another day, will throw the very Coals of Hell at their Parents Heads, and say, A Bloody Father, or a Bloody Mother have you been unto me, you laid me under an Oath and Vow to God in my baptism, but you took no care to acquaint me with the Nature of that Obligation. Oh Cruel Parent, that never put up Prayer for me, that never dropt Tear over me, that never gave any word of spiritual Counsel or Soul-Advice unto me. Oh what a Terrour will it be unto you, to hear your Children give a judicial Testimony against you in the day of your Account. Therefore to prevent this, begin early to instruct your Children in the Fundamental Principles of Religion, by a Familiar Catechising of them. Youth is soft and pliable, and may be bended to our purposes; when your Children are Young, they are most in your Power, and you have then the greatest command of them: But especially then they have not acquired such ill and vicious habits, nor imbibed such false Principles and Notices of Things, as they will do afterwards, if the opportunity of Youth be neglected.*

Sow then the seed of good Instruction in the Morning of your Childrens Youth, before the Enemy sows his Tares. They will be lisping out of Oaths, as soon as Words; if you do not teach them to use their Tongues aright, and be sure you instruct them in the Principles of our common Christianity, not in the Notions and Private Opinions of a Sect, or Party. 'Tis very easie to Prose-

lite young Ones to a Faction, and to Espouse them to some narrow and stingy Opinions : to beget in them an esteem of a particular Party of Men, and to learn them to scorn and despise all the World besides.

Whereas the Principles of real Christianity will oblige them to the Love and Practice of Universal Bignity and Kindness: *Train up therefore a Child in the way wherein it should go, and when it is old it will not depart from it.*

And here I cannot but sadly take notice, how such as account it to no purpose to baptize their Children, do conclude it to be of as little use to Catechise them; and therefore they decry and inveigh against our Practice of teaching Children the Lords-Prayer and Ten Commandments, as breeding them up in a form of Godliness, and causing them to take Gods Holy and Reverend name in vain. I wish that such would consider, how good Christians in all Ages have laboured to season the Understandings of little Ones with the Principles of Christianity; did not *Timothies* Grand-mother and Mother teach him the Scriptures from a Sucking Child, *2 Tim. 3. 15.* Alas the rooms of your Childrens Souls will not be long unfurnisht; the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, will make an early offer, and engage them betimes, and if you begin not early with your Children, you will be forestall'd and find the work much more difficult; for, 'tis easier to keep the strong man out, than to turn him out.

In the next place, let me exhort all Persons here present, Parents and Children, Young and Old, to a double Duty. Often reflect upon your baptism; but think it not sufficient to Salvation that you are baptized.

I. Reflect often upon your own baptism, upon every Solemn occasion, when you see another presented to baptism, remember your own, and call to mind the obligation you lie under, to Die to Sin and to Live unto God, the serious reflection upon baptism in the Person of another

another may be more effectual than if Administred over again to thee in thine own Person. God speaks that to thee in the Person of the Infant, which once he spake to thy self, when thou wert baptized; and remember that your Baptismal engagements which you took upon you many years ago, lye as firmly upon you, as the Childs, which were made this day before your face: in short, let it be your great care and your chief concern, that whilst others erroneously disown their Baptism, you do not practically deny yours, but labour to walk suitably to your baptismal engagements. Live as those that are Redeemed by the Blood of Jesus; as those that are Sanctified and Sealed by the Spirit of Jesus; as those that do expect an eternal fellowship and Communion with Jesus in his Heavenly Kingdom.

2. Think it not sufficient to Salvation that you have been baptized. Set not up your rest there, without a Conversation in all things agreeable thereunto: Oh! know that a Man may go to Hell with the Baptismal Water on his Face, and the Sacramental Cup in his Hand, if he does not Live answerable to his engagements! for the higher the Priviledge, the heavier the Guilt: Varily an un-baptized Heathen at the great Day will not change places with many baptized Christians: Oh, Beg of God then, that you may be born of the Spirit, as well as born of Water; that as you are baptized into Christ, you may put on Christ; that is, partake of his Holy Nature, and imitate his Holy Life: In a word, pray that you may be Baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire: that is, be made partakers of the Sanctifying Graces of the Holy Spirit, whose Operation is like Fire, burning up the Dregs of our Lusts, and the Dross of our Corruptions.

Lastly, I shall subjoyn a word of Friendly Admonition to you, who have assumed to your self the Authority of a publick Teacher in this Place, who have crept in here, and widened a breach amongst this People, who
were

were lately a most United Body: and are daily endeavouring to divide them more and more, by perswading them to renounce their first Dedication to God in Baptism, and to enter into your Communion after the way of Dipping. I solemnly profess I bare no ill will unto your person: But I really pity you as a Person misled by the prejudices of Education, and misleading others, by undertaking an Office (to get Bread) I fear which you are no way qualified for, as appears partly by your own confession, and more fully by your Letter Written to me, which alas, is so far from containing any thing of Arguments, that it wants common sense. I speak not this to shame you, but in real Charity I warn you, to Learn before you undertake to Teach: or if you must be at Teaching, re-assume your late profession of Teaching Children to Read, and pretend not to be an Instructor of Men of Understanding. By this time, I hope you see just cause of blushing at your own Ignorance and rashness in Condemning the Doctrine and practice of the Church of *England*, (and therein of all the Reformed Churches) with reference to Infant Baptism, as Erroneous and Scriptureless. This was the charge given in your Letter, and how you have defended and made good the Charge, I had rather the Auditory should tell you than my self.

After all the pains I have here taken, I have but small hopes of seeing your new Profelites which you have stolen from us, Re-baptized into our Principles, (for an hundred are sooner misled than ten recovered) but if I can for the future prevent our Peoples being dipt into your Opinions, I have what I aim'd at: and if what I have now delivered be so far influenced by the Divine Blessing, as to contribute something towards the establishment of any one Soul whom you have endeavoured to unsettle, I shall for ever Bless Almighty God for the honor he has put upon me, and account my present pains abundantly compensated.

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As to your self and those whom you have perverted, my Prayer shall be to Almighty God to guide you by his Word, and Spirit into all Truth; to reduce you into the Communion of our Church, in which all things necessary to your Salvation are enjoyed, and to preserve and persevere you therein to his Heavenly Kingdom. And for my self and the chief body of this People here assembled, may Almighty God keep us stedfast in his Truth, edifie and build us up in Grace and Knowledge; and may the God of Peace, which brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of his Sheep, make us perfect in every good Work to do his Will. Now brethren I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up and to give an Inheritance amongst them that are Sanctified. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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